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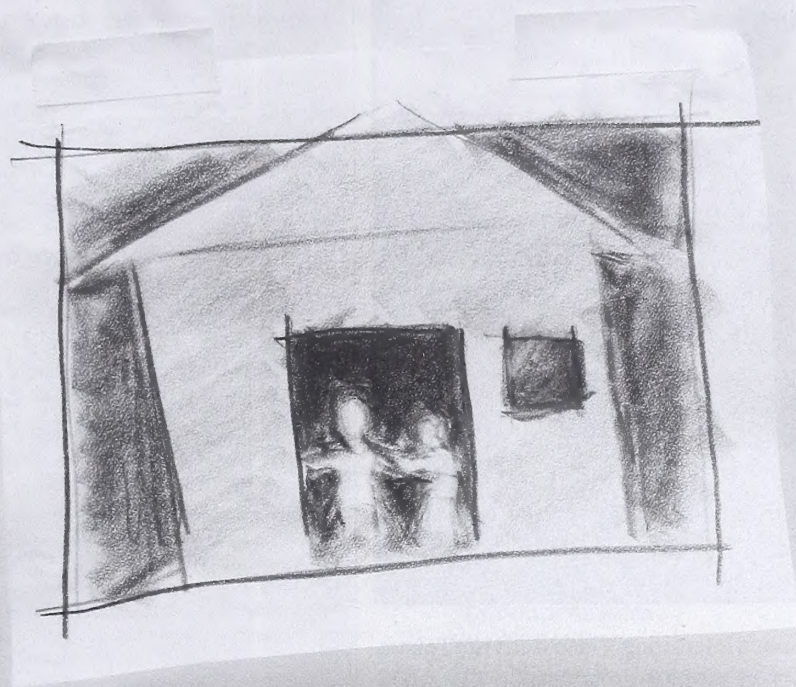
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**JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1991**  
**VOLUME 14, NUMBER 1**

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**T**HIS ISSUE OF *THE INDEPENDENT* is dedicated to the memory of Ray Navarro, a friend, contributor to the magazine, and our former editorial assistant. Although barely 26 years old when he died from an AIDS-related illness on November 9, Ray had already assumed a leading role among media activists in New York City and had begun to establish a national reputation as an advocate for film and video work concerned with social change.

He galvanized the Latino caucus at last fall's Show the Right Thing conference on distribution with his knowledgeable and lucid arguments for using media to educate communities about AIDS. Soon after, he assembled a series of such work for the San Antonio Cinefestival, where he again spoke eloquently about the importance of this effort. He organized community-based screenings of films and tapes dealing with AIDS for Media Network, while also working as the outreach coordinator for New York Citizens' Committee for Responsible Media, the city's advocacy organization for public access on cable TV. He was a founding member of the collective DIVA TV

(Damned Interfering Video Activists Television), an affinity group within the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power, ACT UP. And he produced his own personal art work as well.

Ray was an artist and a scholar, infusing his videomaking and activism with a keen sense of style and intellectual rigor. Likewise, he brought these qualities to his writings for this magazine and other publications, where he contributed an impressive number of articles. We miss his brilliance, his exuberance, and his passion for justice. We miss him at *The Independent*—and in the world.

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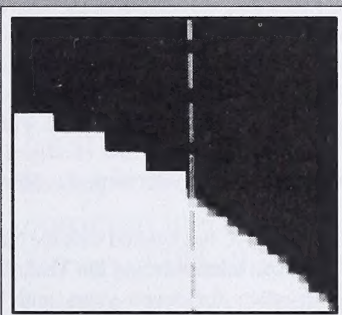




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**COVER:** In Brazil, the Kayapo people use modern technology to preserve their culture and communicate amongst themselves and with the outside world. Here, chief Rop ni taperecords a message to another village, reprimanding them for allowing gold prospectors on their land. In this issue, anthropologist Terence Turner discusses his work with the Kayapo and their approach to video. Also featured is Brazilian critic Arlindo Machado's review on the work of two avant-garde video collectives in São Paulo. Photo courtesy Granada Television Ltd.

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**MAD MONEY**

**NEA ANNOUNCES NEW MEDIA FUND**

"I don't want to see media arts centers run to the end of their course," says NEA Media Program director Brian O'Doherty, explaining the new Media Arts Development Fund. "It could absolutely happen in this harsh funding environment."

A new pilot program has been established by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Media Program and will be administered by the National Alliance of Media Arts Centers (NAMAC). With at least \$250,000 in program funds and another \$50,000 for administration, the Media Arts Development Fund—or MAD Fund—has been set up to assist small, emerging, and culturally diverse organizations, providing grants of \$3,000 to \$10,000.

"We're looking for groups who saw the NEA as impossible to apply to," says MAD Fund program assistant Julian Low, hired by NAMAC to run the first year of the program. Low, a producer who was formerly administrative director of the Asian American Resource Workshop in Boston and a project director at the National Asian American Telecommunications Association, is aiming to attract groups previously considered too local to compete, as well as cultural organizations with a media component. In addition, the fund would target small media arts organizations that have received on-again, off-again support from the NEA. As Media Program director Brian O'Doherty explains, "While we fund some small or minority organizations, many didn't get the kind of special attention they should have had. There's no place within the NEA to cultivate smaller organizations and help them grow."

While the competition will still be tough, it will be "more fair," believes Low, since applicants won't be competing head-to-head with major players like the Museum of Modern Art or the UCLA Film and Television Archives. In addition, the fund's panelists will presumably be closer to the media arts field and more sensitive to the needs of smaller organizations than their counterparts on the NEA's national panels. There will also be more ethnic and regional diversity in the panels' make-up, according to Low, who will make recommendations to the NAMAC board for their selection of panelists.

O'Doherty says he has been thinking about starting such a fund for many years. So why did it come about now? O'Doherty responds, "I'm worried about the future of media arts. I don't want to see media arts centers run to the end of their course—formed in the counterculture of the sixties, grow in the seventies, flourish in the eighties, and die in the nineties. It could absolutely happen in this harsh funding environment." O'Doherty denies that the discussions last spring between NEA chair John Frohnmayer and conser-

vative members of Congress about restructuring the NEA were a catalyst for the MAD Fund's formation. At that time there was serious talk about steering the NEA toward a greater emphasis on established national organizations—instituting minimum grant levels of \$50,000, as well as passing more of the NEA's appropriated funds on to the states for local projects. Both might have a devastating effect on the media arts. Rarely if ever do media arts organizations receive federal grants at that level, and most state arts councils do not have a separate department for media.

O'Doherty also had a second incentive. This was his interest in raising NAMAC's profile within the field. O'Doherty and the NEA's support of NAMAC—both financial and moral—dates back to NAMAC's beginnings. It was O'Doherty who first floated the idea of a national umbrella organization for media arts centers, approaching the Foundation for Independent Video and Film in 1978 with \$15,000 and a matching amount from the Rockefeller Foundation to administer such an organization. After a series of discussions within the field, NAMAC was voted into existence as an independent entity in 1980, with the NEA's backing.

Since then NAMAC has worked with the NEA on several projects, administering the Technical Assistance Program for seven years and the Management Assistance Program for six, both with budgets of \$50,000. (The latter is being folded into the MAD Fund.) Based on this track record, the NEA decided that NAMAC could effectively manage the new fund.

The \$300,000 for this project will not drain money from other areas within the Media Program, O'Doherty insists. In fact, the Media Program is better off by \$100,000 overall than it was a year ago, says O'Doherty, due to the influx of additional monies "from the chair and from outside the department." And the \$250,000 in MAD program funds may grow. O'Doherty would like to see the MAD Fund attract outside support, much like some of the regional fellowship programs, on which the MAD Fund was modeled in part.

O'Doherty says the NEA's commitment is "for the long-term." But the nature and longevity of this project and the arrangement with NAMAC may well depend upon the success of additional fundraising during this pilot year and on the evaluation Low will subsequently complete of the program's outreach to groups outside the regular



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# FIGURES



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loop, as well as its overall effectiveness, based on feedback from the field.

Applications for this first round will be reviewed by the National Council at their meeting in February. For further information, contact: Julian Low, Media Arts Development Fund, 480 Potrero, San Francisco, CA; (415) 861-4107.

PATRICIA THOMSON

## SUN SHINES ON FLORIDA INDEPENDENTS

The Florida Arts Council and Division of Cultural Affairs is gearing up for a new equipment access program. This will be an expansion of its Individual Media Arts Fellowship program, which already provides grants to state media artists. According to fellowship director Norman Easterbrook, in its pilot year the new project will offer Florida artists video and audio editing facilities at the Florida State University School of Motion Picture, Television, and Recording Arts in Sarasota. Equipment will be available at no cost during off-prime hours to selected applicants. Easterbrook is also rounding up additional access providers from local commercial houses and film studios, with the ultimate goal of involving the Florida studio facilities of Walt Disney and Warner Brothers in the program. Still in its planning stages, actual fellowships probably won't begin until October 1991. Easterbrook hopes to have the guidelines and application forms ready by the end of December 1990, in time for the February 22 deadline. Contact: Norman Easterbrook, Division of Cultural Affairs, Florida Arts Council, Dept. of State, The Capitol, Tallahassee, FL 32399-0250; (904) 487-2980.

RENEE TAJIMA

## INDEPENDENT SERIES IN LIMBO AS PTV REVAMPS

Independent and minority producers can't help but be a little nervous about the funding and scheduling changes underway in public television. No one seems ready or able to spell out what their role will be as public television seeks to become more nimble in the marketplace and more visible in US homes.

Facing increasing competition from cable services that are horning in on public TV's turf as well as congressional pressure to restructure national production expenses, last year the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the Public Television Service, and the National Association of Public Television Stations agreed to centralize the scheduling, funding, and marketing of public TV's programs. The unwieldy bureaucracy of old would be replaced by an agile coordinated system under the control of a single chief programming executive, Jennifer Lawson. Lawson is being advised by the newly created National Program Policy Committee (NPPC), a 17-member body that includes representatives from CPB, PBS, the stations, plus

As a result of the restructuring of public television, funding for ongoing series is now up to PBS's chief programming executive, Jennifer Lawson. This affects independent showcases like *P.O.V.*, which programs such work as Ari Marcopoulos and Maja Zmic's film on a 14-year old drummer, Larry Wright.

Photo: Ari Marcopoulos, courtesy P.O.V.

two from the National Coalition of Independent Public Broadcasting Producers (Lillian Jimenez and Marlon Riggs) and two from the National Minority Consortia (Frank Blythe and Dai Sil Kim-Gibson).

Under the agreement, Lawson will manage half of CPB's \$45-million Television Program Fund in addition to the \$74.7-million stations currently spent on programming. PBS's share of Program Fund money will go to established series, while CPB will use the other half to develop new programming. Ken Burns' *The Civil War* was the new system's first big success, with coordinated scheduling and advanced, heavy promotion resulting in the highest ratings ever for a PBS series.

But some independent and minority producers are concerned about the lack of any defined role for independents in the new scheme or clear plan for how the priority of "multiculturalism" will translate into programming. While Lawson has been heard calling for more bold, innovative work that will reach out beyond public TV's current audience, there are also signs that the centralized system will emphasize series and the mainstream. Among the programs in the pipeline or being considered for development by PBS, for instance, are a children's geography game show and a dramatic mini-series.

By written agreement, CPB and PBS agreed to put funding for six series into PBS' hands: *American Playhouse* and *American Experience*—series that commission and acquire independent productions—plus *Wonderworks*, *Frontline*, *MacNeill/Lehrer Newshour*, and *Great Performances*. But that left five series, including independent showcases *P.O.V.* and *Alive from Off Center*, in apparent funding limbo. In November PBS announced that it would provide support for *P.O.V.* and *American Masters*, among other programs. However, PBS is cutting *American Playhouse* back from a weekly to a monthly series beginning fall 1991. *Alive from Off Center*, *Long Ago and Far Away*, and several other series previously funded by CPB are still "in the middle somewhere," says Don Marbury, director of CPB's Program Fund. Although Marbury may be able to carve out money for some of these shows next season, there are no guarantees. And if CPB doesn't fund them, they will have to find money elsewhere.

Will PBS continue to fund *P.O.V.*, *American*



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*Experience*, and other independent works over the long term? *P.O.V.* executive producer Marc Weiss is confident that it will—even though there is no legislative mandate for PBS to support independent productions, as there is for CPB. Pointing to Lawson's support for *The '90s* and *The Civil War*, Weiss notes, "Jennifer is fairly savvy about the roles independents can play on public television." PBS spokesperson Rob Deigh insists that "independents continue to be an important part of the public television process" and assures independents that the new arrangement doesn't mean there will be a "housecleaning of any kind."

But members of the NPPC who represent independents and people of color are concerned nevertheless. Jimenez notes that there doesn't seem to be any "vision of how to integrate independents into the system. At least there is a plan and vision for children's television; there's nothing like it for independents." Fellow NPPC member Kim-Gibson says that after extensive discussion, the group could not even agree on the meaning of "independent" and finally "agreed to disagree" over whether programming such as *Frontline* is independent—a classification independents have argued against for years, based on questions of final cut, copyright, and budget control.

How multiculturalism will be implemented also worries Kim-Gibson and Jimenez. According to Kim-Gibson, the reigning opinion on the NPPC seems to favor mainstreaming, holding that any single "ethnic" point of view limits the audience and is of special interest only to the group whose culture is depicted.

Lawson told both Jimenez and Kim-Gibson that she wants to meet with leaders of the National Coalition and the five minority production consortia to discuss these issues. Meanwhile Kim-

Gibson and Jimenez, along with Riggs and Blythe, will continue to press for the concerns of producers of color and independents on the NPPC. But as Jimenez observes, "Everybody's waiting for something to happen." At its last meeting, the NPPC gave Lawson a vote of confidence, which for the independent and minority representatives was "conditional." They're waiting to see some improvement in how PBS addresses these issues.

ANDREW BLAU

*Andrew Blau analyzes communication policy matters at the Center for Telecommunications and Information Studies at Columbia University.*

## KERA'S OPEN DOOR POLICY

"Some of the best programming on public TV comes from independents. They are innovative, bold, and show passion for their subjects," attests KERA-TV's Sylvia Komatsu with great enthusiasm. Komatsu is director of TV Programming and executive producer of *News Addition*, a weekly news magazine on the Dallas-area public television station. "We need major series like *The Civil War*, but we also need smaller programs that give insight," she asserts.

Komatsu came to realize there was a larger independent production community in the Dallas area than she had imagined after attending a presentation by representatives of the Independent Television Service (ITVS) held last summer in Dallas, which was hosted by the Video Association of Dallas, a three-year-old organization promoting Texas independent videomakers. Everyone was surprised at the turnout. About 125 people showed up, most with ideas for independent productions.

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Bart Weiss, director of the Video Association and board member of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, saw an opportunity for dialogue. He approached Komatsu at the ITVS meeting, and within weeks they began holding regular introductory meetings for independents and key people at KERA-TV to share information and ideas. "We've opened a window of opportunity," says Weiss.

On average 10 independents are invited to each meeting. They spend an hour or more with key decision-makers on KERA's programming staff: in addition to Komatsu, there is producer/unit production manager Suzanne Dooley, program director Bill Young, and director of Program Development, Marketing, and Contracts Deanna Collingwood. The producers get to discuss their areas of interest, and station reps inform them of ways in which KERA can offer support, while also explaining procedures and guidelines. Weiss and Komatsu plan to continue this series of meetings until everyone who attended the ITVS gathering (and some who did not) has had an opportunity to talk with KERA staff.

KERA has presented independents with a number of potential options: commissioned work; coproductions involving partial funding and/or use of station equipment and facilities; acquisition of finished programs; resource information on programming already in the PBS pipeline; suggestions for fundraising, including after-market sales; and assistance as a presenting station, whereby they introduce a project to the PBS network.

Even more concretely, participants heard about a number of programs that have set precedents for how independents can work with the station. For example, independent producer Mark Birnbaum presented an idea for a documentary on a suburban secession movement. The idea was accepted, and he went on to produce the 30-minute piece, which was followed by a live studio discussion exploring the issue further. Other independents have made use of *News Addition* as a platform for their ideas. They have first created short news magazine segments, and later been asked to expand them into 30-minute specials. Such cases include Clayton Corrie with *Black Art: Ancestral Legacy*, Gay Parrish with *Indian Pictographs*, and Judy Kelly with *Prison Art*.

Certain projects have begun to take shape as a result of KERA's meetings with independents. Suzanne Dooley has gathered a number of ideas from different independents for a children's program and packaged them in a proposal for PBS. Bart Weiss is working with Bill Young on a *Showcase of Independents* and a special on *Student Shorts*.

Beyond the development of specific projects, KERA hopes that these meetings will send a message to Dallas-area independents—that the station is interested in hearing more from them. Dallas independents seem to have been reticent about sending in videotapes for consideration,

according to program director Young, who regularly receives work from around the country but gets relatively few tapes from local independents, despite their numbers.

Komatsu observes that there is a lesson here: Even if an independent has been turned down by a local PBS station, "Persevere. Come back. Things change. People change." Komatsu's influence on KERA is a good example. In the past few years she has moved from being a documentary producer to director of TV Programming and, as of November, to vice president of TV Programming. Thanks to her interest in and understanding of independents, KERA is being perceived as a place of opportunity for independents.

Says Komatsu, "We're actually opening two doors—one in producing and one in acquisitions." Weiss adds, "While there've been some results already, the biggest impact will be long term. We gave people the key to get in the door. Now it's up to them. And their ideas."

ANDREA BOARDMAN

*Andrea Boardman is an independent scriptwriter in Dallas, working on corporate productions and documentaries.*

## ITVS TO ISSUE FIRST RFP

At a meeting in St. Paul on October 21, 1990, the board of directors of the Independent Television Service (ITVS) approved procedures for the organization's first round of funding. Prior to the meeting, they announced the appointment of Arthur Tsuchiya as policy advisor for the General Solicitation funding category. A visiting professor of video at Middlebury College in Vermont and former arts program analyst and acting director at the New York State Council on the Arts Media Program, Tsuchiya is also an independent videomaker. ITVS guidelines and application forms for General Solicitations, which will entail at least \$2-million of ITVS' \$6-million annual production budget, were mailed to independent producers in December 1990.

Under the General Solicitations category, proposals for programs of all genres, styles, formats, and lengths are being solicited and reviewed through an elaborate process of peer review. The current plan calls for a division of proposals among eight to 10 regional subpanels, which will then recommend projects for review by a national panel convened in St. Paul, ITVS' headquarters. Although the primary determinant for funding will be a proposal's overall merit, ITVS has acknowledged that the ability to package or program nonstandard-length works will be a factor in the decision. In addition to initiating the funding mechanism for its General Solicitation mode, ITVS is requesting ideas and suggestions for series or program concepts for its Magazine and Collaborative categories [see "Field Reports," in the July 1990 issue of *The Independent*].

At the same meeting, the ITVS board also



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adopted definitions of independent producer and independent production as criteria for funding eligibility. The document produced by the group defines independent production as "a production under the artistic, budgetary, and editorial control of an independent producer or independent production entity owning the copyright." An eligible producer is an "independent producer or independent production entity, [which] means an individual producer—or a partnership or organization of the individual producer or producers responsible for the production—who is not regularly employed as a producer by a public or commercial broadcast entity or film studio, and especially the smaller independent organizations and individuals who, while talented, may not yet have received national recognition." The guidelines go on to state that "ITVS intends, within the above definition, that the service will be open and that present or past association with public television stations will not automatically exclude a particular producer from participation."

Although ITVS has been gearing up its grant-making process, the new service still does not have a contract with Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Negotiations between representatives of the two entities have been ongoing since the incorporation of ITVS in the fall 1989. The differences centered on ancillary rights, profit-sharing with CPB, CPB's efforts to control the ITVS bylaws, and their intention to use a portion of ITVS' budget to cover in-house program selection and packaging costs. The ITVS board of directors has maintained that Congress' directive that ITVS be constituted and administered as an independent organization requires that they retain control over the service's bylaws. The board also reaffirmed their understanding that the law requires ITVS to distribute the full \$6-million in independent production funds to independent producers and that the reasonable expenses of program selection and packaging must be paid for by CPB—in addition to the designated \$6-million dollars in production funds—as part of CPB's mandate to adequately fund the operating and administrative costs of the service. At a negotiating meeting held in November, CPB and ITVS reached an agreement covering the less contentious issues on the table, leaving these two to be resolved. ITVS intends to seek support from independent producers to prevent CPB from reducing the \$6-million to cover these operating expenses.

One of CPB's primary objections to the current ITVS bylaws is the designation of the National Coalition of Independent Public Broadcasting Producers (NCIPBP) as the representative of the independent producers in US. Yet it was NCIPBP which initiated and coordinated the organized appeal to Congress, which led in turn to the establishment of the new independent service. They have also acted as a watchdog over the ITVS' autonomy from CPB. The ITVS' articles of incorporation state that the "association then representing the organizations or associations of independent producers... in the United States (the

representative 'association'))" has the responsibility of nominating directors to the ITVS board. In a related agreement, CPB agreed that "at present that 'representative association' is the National Coalition of Independent Public Broadcasting Producers." A NCIPBP nominating committee will soon take up the task of nominating two board members, replacements for Ed Emshwiller, who died last July, and David Davis, who resigned in June.

Last May, at a meeting in Boston, the NCIPBP agreed to expand its own board of directors by four seats (from 15 to 19) in order to "include more multicultural representation and special interests, i.e., Native American, gay and lesbian, video artists and independent producers." Additionally, they decided to hold new elections utilizing national nomination and voting procedures. This fall, the NCIPBP board was joined by four new members: George Burdeau, director of Communication Arts Department, Institute of American Indian Arts (Santa Fe, NM); Michelle Materre, associate director of Women Make Movies (New York City); Hye Jung Park, director of Community Affairs, Downtown Community TV Center (New York City); and Jose A. Vargas, executive director of the Chicago Latino Cinema, which coordinates the annual Chicago Latino Film Festival.

## SAN FRANCISCO COMMISSION: BOON OR BUREAUCRACY?

The Bay Area independent community seems to be taking a wait and see attitude towards the newly created San Francisco Film and Video Arts Commission (SFFVAC). The seven-month-old commission is the brainchild of August Coppola, dean of the Creative Arts Department at San Francisco State University, older brother of Francis Ford Coppola, and the commission's president. SFFVAC has visionary goals for promoting the area as a production center, but virtually no funding to implement it.

Mayor Art Agnos formed the 11-member body at Coppola's urging last spring to complement the work of the existing Mayor's Film Office, which has functioned since 1980 as a city production liaison, handling permits, fees, marketing, and the like. Although many states have full-fledged film commissions, including the Los Angeles-based California Film Commission (CFC), a city film commission is a rarity. The SFFVAC's mandate is ambitious. As Coppola explained to the CFC during a hearing in October, the SFFVAC plans to raise money to promote independent filmmaking, create a supportive atmosphere that would attract media business and long-term investment to San Francisco, and train young people in film and video arts.

So far, no specific programs have been created. The SFFVAC, which meets monthly, recently organized working committees to develop activities. It now has to figure out how to finance

them. The commission has a total annual budget of \$60,000—\$10,000 from the city and the rest raised from fees. At present, the city money provides for the salary of its executive director, Robin Eickman, who continues to go about the business of negotiating fees and permits as head of the Mayor's Film Office.

With so few dollars committed to the commission, Bay Area film and videomakers may be reluctant to expend much energy lobbying it. "My hunch is, once again, it's a real bureaucratic thing," says Luz Castillo, executive director of the Latino media center Cine Acción. Her organization is already busy advocating for Latino programming and access at the public television station KQED. Castillo and other media arts organizations did meet informally to articulate independents' concerns at the request of film/videomaker Debra Chasnoff (*Choosing Children, Acting Our Age*), who has the unenviable position as the sole independent representative on the SFFVAC. Chasnoff herself remains optimistic about the commission's openness to the independent community and would like to see formal proposals brought before it. "There's absolutely nothing in the way the commission is set up that precludes independents," states Chasnoff. "It's a matter of independents figuring out what they want."

Given their activist history, there's no question that Bay Area independents will have little trouble developing an agenda if the commission had the power and financing to implement these ideas. In fact, according to the Film Art Foundation newsletter *Release Print*, FAF board president Ashley James already addressed SFFVAC at an August 6 meeting and recommended specific projects, including a state of the art screening facility and apprenticeships or internships for young artists. However, commercial production will probably continue to be the priority for the commission—something *Release Print* editor Robert Anbian describes as the major faultline in the commission's existence. "The bottom line is they wouldn't want to do anything that raises the cost of commercial production in San Francisco," concludes Anbian. Given these constraints, James' recommendations may be a realistic alternative for addressing the needs of independents. Apprenticeship and internship programs—or, perhaps, a discount commercial facility access program like the New York-based Media Alliance On-Line service—can achieve a low-cost, symbiotic relationship that benefits both the commercial and independent communities.

RT

## WILLIAM T. KIRBY: 1911-1990

More than anyone else, William T. Kirby championed the cause of media arts at the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. As a result, the foundation has spent roughly \$70-million for film, video, public television, and other media since 1978. Kirby died, apparently of a heart





**William T. Kirby**

Photo: Avis Mandel, courtesy John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

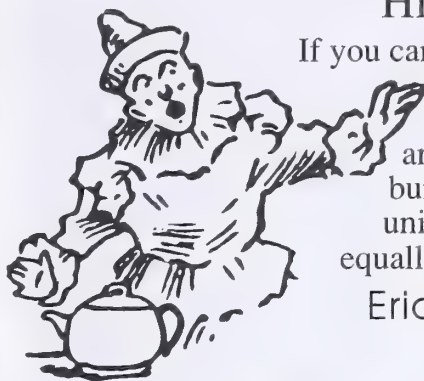
attack, while visiting friends in West Bend, Wisconsin. He was 79 years old and lived in Chicago. Kirby had undergone open-heart surgery last year.

For more than 25 years, Kirby acted as John MacArthur's personal attorney and general counsel for the entrepreneur's many enterprises in banking and real estate. In 1970 Kirby helped MacArthur and his wife set up the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. MacArthur named the foundation as the heir to the bulk of his fortune and, as Kirby later noted with pride, "When he died, he left the money free of strings." Kirby played a key role in guiding the foundation through troubled times after MacArthur's death in 1978. One of the original members of the foundation's board of directors, Kirby also served as vice chair from 1978 until his death, except for an intervening appointment as chair from 1988 to May 1990.

In 1978 Kirby also joined the board of the Retirement Research Foundation, which was set up in 1950 with funds from John MacArthur. It was his idea to initiate the National Media Awards, commonly called the Owl Awards, in 1985 to encourage film and video works dealing with issues of aging through an annual competition.

The independent spirit appealed to Kirby long before he took up the cause of independent media. In 1950, he served as the defense attorney for the innovative car designer and manufacturer Preston Tucker, who was charged with fraud and conspiracy. In an emotional closing argument, Kirby helped win Tucker's acquittal. He later served as a consultant on Francis Ford Coppola's film *Tucker: The Man and His Dream*.

While at the MacArthur Foundation, Kirby took the lead in positioning media as one of the foundation's priorities, alongside such areas as



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- |  |   |
|--|---|
| ■ <b>The Magical Stories</b><br>Ondrej Rudavsky (1990) (10 mins.)<br>Brooklyn, NY                      | ■ <b>Untitled 1987</b><br>Barry J. Hershey (12/89) (6 mins.)<br>Concord, MA       |
| ■ <b>A Metamorphosis in Logic</b><br>Brady Lewis (12/89) (7½ mins.)<br>Pittsburgh, PA                  | ■ <b>Short of Breath</b><br>Jay Rosenblatt (1990) (10 mins.)<br>San Francisco, CA |
| ■ <b>Brain in the Desert</b><br>Jennifer Seaman & Jay Rosenblatt<br>(1990) (5 mins.) San Francisco, CA | ■ <b>All My Relations</b><br>Joanna Priestley (1990) (5 mins.)<br>Portland, OR    |
| ■ <b>Testament of the Rabbit</b><br>Ted Lyman (12/88) (22 mins.)<br>Richmond, VT                       | ■ <b>Baobab</b><br>Erik Knight (1989) (9½ mins.)<br>New York, NY                  |
|  | ■ <b>Walls in the Woods</b><br>Sal Giammona (1989) (8 mins.)<br>San Francisco, CA |

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health, the environment, world population, education, and peace and international cooperation. In an interview a few months before his death in October, Kirby explained why the foundation made a commitment to independent media: "We went to the independent community because they speak with the authentic voice of their culture, of their time, of their age—and they speak freely from the heart and very eloquently. So that's why we're there and we're very proud of what they've accomplished."

Between 1986 and 1990, the MacArthur Foundation gave media arts centers alone almost \$7.8-million, including \$2-million in 1990. In addition, substantial funds were regularly allocated to a variety of public television programs, including *P.O.V.* and *Alive from Off Center*; to *Video Classics*, a series of public television programs distributed to public libraries; and to the Learning Channel's showcase series *The Independents*, which the foundation has supported since 1983. Individual film- and videomakers and scholars have benefitted from the foundation's five-year, no-strings fellowships. Winners of these "genius grants" have included video artist Bill Viola, filmmakers John Sayles, Yvonne Rainer, Charles Burnett, and Frederick Wiseman, and communications professor Michael Schudson.

At Kirby's suggestion, the foundation had already begun to look for a staff person responsible for media at the time of his death. The foundation plans to appoint a program officer following an internal review of the program, which will be completed by March 1991. This review is part of a cyclical process through which the foundation evaluates all of its funding priorities, according to foundation spokesperson Ted Hearne. "The outcome may be an endorsement or a revision of the program's direction," Hearne says.

Kirby took pride in the organization he called a "marvelous instrument for the good of society." The feeling was apparently mutual. Adele Simmons, president of the MacArthur Foundation, says, "Along with everyone else at the foundation, I take great pride and satisfaction in seeing the contribution that independent producers and other MacArthur grantees associated with the media have made to television. We will always be grateful for Bill Kirby's genius in seeing this potential. It is an extraordinary achievement but perfectly typical of him that in the last decade of his life he became so expert in this field."

JOYCE BOLINGER

Joyce Bolinger is director of development at Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs and former director of the Center for New Television.

## SEQUELS

Legislation reauthorizing the **National Endowment for the Arts** for three years was finally passed in late October ["Punitive Damages: Congress Threatens Cuts in NEA Funding," Oc-



tober 1989]. The bill eliminates the language Sen. Jesse Helms introduced into 1989 legislation prohibiting funds from going to "obscene or indecent art" and leaves the determination of the "obscenity" of a work of art to the courts, rather than the NEA. If convicted and after all appeals are exhausted, a grantee will be debarred from receiving further NEA funds until the grant is repaid. In a compromise gesture toward conservative opponents of the agency, the bill states that the NEA must take "into consideration general standards of decency and respect for the diverse beliefs and values of the American public" when awarding grants—a vaguely worded requirement that may be challenged on constitutional grounds. The bill also gives more funds to the states—shifting the present 80:20 federal to state ratio to 65:35 by FY1993—and includes procedural changes that weaken the authority of the peer panels and boost that of the chairman and the National Council of the Arts.

Shortly after the reauthorization bill was passed, the NEA quietly removed the controversial non-obscenity pledge that had been included in the contracts sent to grant recipients this past year. At least 16 artists and institutions had refused to sign, forfeiting \$318,000 in NEA funding.

It is widely expected that conservatives will not give up the fight but launch another attack on the NEA's annual appropriations bill. Similar assaults may occur on a state level, with state legis-

lators trying to introduce the Helms language. In addition, President Bush will be appointing 13 new people to fill expired terms on the National Council, and fundamentalists have already been lobbying Bush to name more "Christians."



Years after PBS refused to air the anti-nuclear exposé *Dark Circle*, by Chris Beaver and Judy Irving, they had a change of heart. In 1986, they dismissed the film because of its "credibility problem," "incompleteness and prejudicial treatment of material... questionable use of statistics," and "simplistic and irresponsible" discussion of issues ["Dark Circle: Film Dropped in PBS Balancing Act," August/September 1986]. Not so coincidentally, many of the nuclear weapons manufacturers prominently featured in the film were also underwriters of PBS programs. Turner Broadcasting wound up giving *Dark Circle* its national broadcast premiere. This was followed last August by an appearance on the PBS series *P.O.V.* Thanks to the latter, *Dark Circle* became PBS' single nominee and winner in the category of Outstanding News and Documentary Individual Achievement at the prestigious Emmy Awards. Filmmaker Irving found the award—as well as PBS' about-face—to be "very satisfying."



The Senate confirmed the appointment of Sharon

Rockefeller to the board of directors of the **Corporation for Public Broadcasting**. This will be Rockefeller's third term on the board, which she chaired from 1981 to 1984. CPB board member Marshall Turner, a San Francisco venture capitalist, will succeed Ken Towery as chair, with Daniel Brenner reelected vice chair.



The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation has appointed **Victor Rabinowitch** to fill the newly established office of vice president for programs. Previously named as the foundation's new president is **Adele Simmons**. After seven years as director of exhibitions at the Southwest Alternate Media Project, **Marion Luntz** has moved on to become film program director at the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston. The American Film and Video Association's executive director, **Ron MacIntyre**, announced his resignation. He is now director of the Suburban Audio Visual Service in Chicago. AFVA's new director of information is **James Casey Ashe**. The Independent Feature Project is conducting a search for a new executive director to succeed **Karen Arikian**. Newly appointed to the position of head of the Canada Council's Media Arts Section is **Susan Ditta**, previously a film and video curator at the National Gallery of Canada.

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## SHORT SUBJECTS/SOCIAL IMPACT

### The Direct Effect Public Service Announcements

BILL HARRIGAN

The transformation of television as an American social and cultural institution by the gradual triumph of cable and satellite over the last decade continues to alter the forms of what we see, in ways that still aren't clear. Abetted by the remote-control device, viewers gallop through dozens of images in as many seconds, waiting for one to command attention. And as any TV viewer can attest, one thing begins to look like another—it's a question, almost, of masquerade. This is most pointedly the case with respect to that register in which television's "minor forms" flourish—commercials, music videos, public service announcements. For better or worse, by accident or design,

they're increasingly competing on common formal grounds.

The 14 public service announcements (two cycles of seven each) going under the name Direct Effect represent a novel intervention in this regard. Direct Effect is a project of Direct Impact, which itself is a project of the C-Hundred Film Corp., a small production and distribution operation based in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and operated by filmmaker Jim McKay and R.E.M. musician Michael Stipe. C-Hundred is in the business of making music videos and has a small catalogue of home videocassettes they distribute (Jem Cohen's *Just Hold Still*, McKay's own *Light-hearted Nation*, and a forthcoming collection of James Herbert's films titled *Figures*). Income derived from C-Hundred's activities is then driven into Direct Impact, the operation's nonprofit wing, which exists to produce and promote the public service announcements going by the name Direct Effect.

Although hardly uniform, the Direct Effect PSAs are an attempt to make very short films that are stylistically adventurous, under extremely limited circumstances, while retaining the advocacy value of the form. In addition, as McKay explains it, there's a strong commitment to expanding the range of permissible issues one might expect a PSA to address. For example, in the first cycle (February 1990), director Tom Gilroy's *Love Knows No Color* simply features shots of an interracial couple and a child, followed by the written punch line. Also in the first cycle, Jem Cohen's *What Does "Away" Mean?* quietly asks the viewer to wonder where garbage actually goes. Other spots in the first cycle include one on the abortion rights debate by *Sassy* magazine editor Jane Pratt, one on chemical farming by Stipe, and one on world peace by rap artist KRS-One and Susan Robeson. The second cycle,



James Herbert's oblique safer sex admonition *Be Caring, Be Careful* is one of 14 public service announcements going under the name Direct Effect.

Courtesy C-Hundred

Jane Pratt's PSA about sexual harassment features vérité footage of the leers, cat-calls, and come-ons that follow one woman as she moves through her day in New York City.

Courtesy C-Hundred



completed in September 1990, features a comparable mix of approved and oblique topics, the most striking one being another by Pratt, an extremely effective verité illustration of sexual harassment on the streets of New York.

Each made for under \$2,000, the spots are deliberately arty in their feel; they're slow, contemplative rather than emphatic, and you don't always know what it is you're watching until the final image or text throws it into relief. That ambiguity is heightened by the fact that the only organizational affiliation given is the neutral-sounding Direct Effect, as opposed to a more pointed anchor such as Greenpeace. In the second cycle spots, Direct Effect's phone number is listed. If callers respond to a specific PSA, Direct Impact sends them more detailed information on the issue it addresses.

The spots have been seen on a hit-or-miss basis on MTV, VH-1, CNN, and other national venues, but McKay says their biggest success thus far has come about by mailing copies of the cassettes to 150 locally-originated music video programs across the country (aided in this effort by Warner Brothers, which is R.E.M.'s record label). As he says, "We want to get the word out, and anyone who calls me up and can prove that they have a show, I'll send them a three-quarter-inch cassette."

Despite the usual amount of chronic uncertainty where funding is concerned, Direct Impact is currently preparing the third cycle of seven spots, scheduled for completion in the beginning of 1991. Among the offbeat issues to be addressed this time around are male circumcision and white collar crime.

In the meantime, Direct Impact is presently looking for new producers for spots for the fourth cycle. Once a spot is commissioned, the producer is given \$2,000 to cover production costs; if it comes in under \$2,000, the difference is returned to Direct Impact, and if it goes over, the producer makes up the difference. Direct Impact handles duplicating, publicizing, and distributing the tapes.

According to McKay, interested producers should contact Direct Impact with a short treatment (about two paragraphs) or a storyboard, and this then may be followed up with a request for a sample reel. Most of the spots thus far have been 30 seconds (which comes out to 21 seconds after the opening and closing logo), though some have been 60 (which means 51). McKay says, "Anyone, anywhere, can send in an idea—there's going to be a certain number of them that hit the nail on the head. If it's been covered in the mainstream media, we want to cover it differently, but otherwise we're looking for topics that have not been recognized at all and in those cases they might be handled in a very traditional way, if need be."

Direct Impact can be contacted at: C-Hundred Film Corp., Box 506, Lancaster, PA 17603; (717) 399-9288.

*Bill Horrigan is film/video curator at the Wexner Center for the Visual Arts in Columbus, Ohio.*



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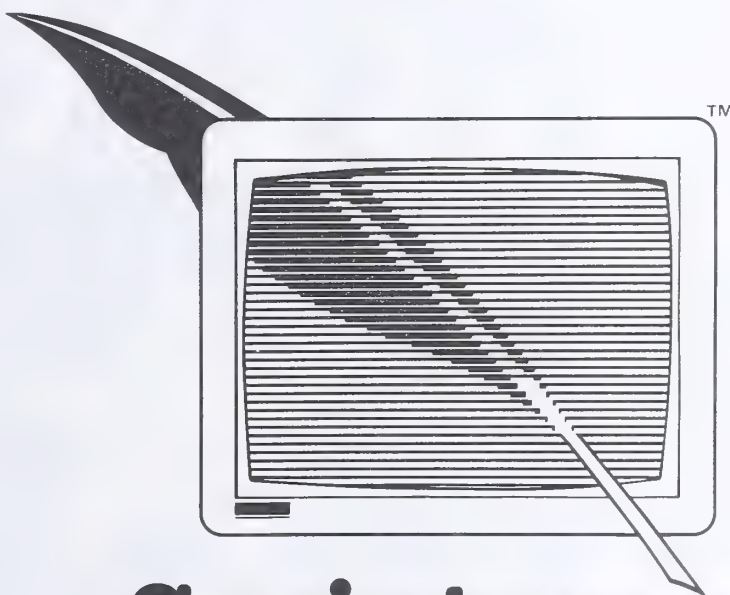
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## BREATHELESS

## A Beginner's Guide to the 1990 Independent Feature Market

AMY BEER

As you open the large glass doors of the Angelika Film Center, take a deep breath and prepare to dive into a pool of hopeful filmmakers, harried volunteers, and skittish buyers. Welcome to the twelfth Annual Independent Feature Film Market. You paid your entry fee for your feature documentary film last June and received notice in mid-August that it was accepted. Now, at the brink of the event itself, the adrenaline is flowing....

The IFFM is organized once a year in New York City by the Independent Feature Project. Founded in 1979, IFP is a nonprofit membership organization that acts as a support structure for inde-

your love, that tender bundle of joy—your film. It's your first film in the market.

It's the first day of the market. After a brief stop at the registration desk, you dash off with piles of papers in your hands to have your picture taken, snap and a snip, your smiling face slides through the mini-lamination machine and, poof, you have it. Your tag, that blue clip of plastic that admits you to parties and screenings. That blue piece of plastic that labels you an artist and here to do business.

Over a two-week period in early October the films were shown in Angelika's six theaters all day long. This gave filmmakers and buyers an opportunity to mingle before and after screenings, making and maintaining valuable professional contacts. In addition to being a forum for buying and selling films, the market served as a conference on independent filmmaking, with the range of programs including personal consultations with experts in the fields of law, insurance, film boards, festivals, and distribution. There were also seminars, breakfast symposia, and luncheons covering such issues as writing, foreign markets, First Amendment rights, censorship, technology, and producing. Speakers included writer/director John Sayles; writer/director Pedro Almodovar; William Gunlar, a lawyer from Miramax, known for defending First Amendment rights; and producer Richard Quay. A small staff from IFP and Angelika ran the market with the help of a large, diverse group of volunteers, numbering more than 150 this year.

All around you people zip by, blue tags (filmmaker or script), orange tags (volunteer), purple tags (market pass), and, finally, the glorious green tags. Green. Money. Buyer. Your target. But how to reach them? Surrounded, pursued by flocks of anxious filmmakers and others, they slip in and out of the crowd. As luck would have it, one stops by you long enough to say hello to some other familiar face. You seize the moment....

"Excuse me, are you looking for documentaries?" you blurt out.

"No," they grimace and walk away.

Oops, too direct. Time to rethink your strategy. Time to move slowly. As the market wears on, you practice the approach. Calm lines...cool lines.

"Enjoying the market?" Most people are easy to approach.

Over 250 companies represented by more than 400 individuals attended the market this year looking for films. They included major studios,

pendent producers by offering a variety of programs and services that focus on production, finance, distribution, and marketing of feature films. The market—one of their main vehicles—provides an opportunity for filmmakers to present their work to an audience of festival programmers, distributors, and domestic and foreign buyers. In order to participate in the market, independent producers are required to fill out an entry form, submit the work for screening by the market committee, and pay a fee of \$400 for features or \$325 for shorts or works-in-progress.

Out of a field of 275 films submitted this year, the IFFM screened 213: 84 documentaries and fiction features, 67 works-in-progress, and 62 shorts and videotapes. The market also had for the first time a script directory, which entailed a \$250 entry fee and included all 103 scripts submitted. The vast majority of work came from the United States and Canada but also included the talent of filmmakers from all over the world. The participants in the market ranged from seasoned professionals to novices.

Your mission—you've already accepted it—is to promote that sweat of your brow, that labor of

Days and nights of dashing after buyers and ducking into screenings. Have you told just about everyone at the market about your film? By now, you can describe your labor of love in seven words or less.



A graphic of a clapperboard, tilted diagonally, with the words 'THE HOUSTON INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL' written in bold, black, sans-serif capital letters across its center.

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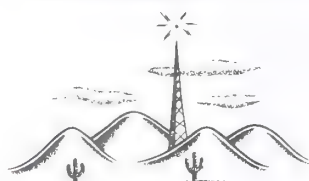
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With a cappuccino bar on one side and a view of Soho on the other, filmmakers hustle their work in the lobby of the Angelika Film Center, the hub of activity at the Independent Feature Film Market.

Photo: Gary Pollard



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independent distributors, international festivals and markets, nonprofit organizations, agents, foreign, cable and public television buyers. A comprehensive list of their contact names, numbers, descriptions, and current markets are published in the market's *Buyers Directory*, IFFM's *Who's Who* available to film/videomakers at the beginning of the market. The first directory included names of buyers who preregistered and was updated every other day with information on buyers who registered as the event continued.

As the market wears on you refocus your objective. It's simple, get buyers to see your film. You head towards the mailboxes. IFFM provides rows and rows of numbered little boxes. By the end of the first week, some of the buyer's boxes are so packed with flyers and other paraphernalia that the small but official looking invitation to your film will hardly fit. Some people move swiftly from box to box, stuffing each one. But you have a plan. After careful study of the *Buyers Directory*, you narrow down a list, a hit list of buyers who bought films like yours during the last year. You question other filmmakers and market participants. What have they heard? Is it true the Germans have all come with blank checks?

Your hands now emptied of invitations, you head back into the crowd. The days wear on, you keep moving from tag to tag, absorbing information. The buyer from Sweden says he isn't here to look at documentaries, but he gives you a name and address of someone at his company who is. Eureka.

"Can I use your name, when I call?"

"Yes, but don't call. Send him a screening copy first," he replies, dashing away, soon to be swallowed up by a sea of colored tags.

Foreign buyers continue to increase in attendance with each annual market. Foreign television seems to have an expanding need for innovative and independent films. Buyers come from Germany, Sweden, Japan, Italy, Australia, and all over the globe.

Every day ends with a review of contacts and cards. You write cryptic notes on the back of each card: "We met Oct. 10th at the market." "She had red hair." "He's looking for comedies." "They only take submissions through agents." Each one finds a new place in the list of priorities for follow-up. With each nightfall the parties are on. They





have a different atmosphere. Nobody has a screening to rush to—a captive audience. Your objective becomes geographic. If you stand still, after a while the movement of the room may bring people past you. Idle conversation is easier.

Parties are sponsored by film organizations, institutes, and commissions. Sponsor organizations also included guarantors, law offices, film boards, and many others. They are held in downtown Manhattan restaurants and clubs and can be as formal as a champagne reception at the Puck Building or as casual as a beer bash at the Knitting Factory. The parties are well attended by everyone at the market and provide a festive environment for networking.

"Oh yes, it's too hot for champagne," you agree with the tall gentleman with a British accent. "Are you here with a film?"

He's here with a script. It seems cold, but you move on, you're looking for buyers. You're becoming comfortable with three-minute conversations. Back to geography, you head across the room. It becomes easier to think of covering floor space than dashing through people. Maybe this networking thing isn't so bad after all. You pick up conversation and information as you go, and your confidence actually builds.

Surprise! You've landed next to a green tag. A quick glance—they're from the top of your "hit" list of buyers interested in your kind of film. Stand by, stay calm, and listen. Eventually you become part of the conversation.

"Oh yes, I read about your film, when is it screening?" You find out she's leaving early, you set up a special screening time and head back into the room. The cycle keeps repeating itself. Days and nights of dashing after buyers and ducking into screenings. Have you told just about everyone at the market about your film? By now, you

can describe your labor of love in seven words or less. Finally, it arrives: Judgement Day. Your screening. Outside the screening room you drop a pile of press kits. They're filled with photos, articles, and letters of interest...the bait.

Ten minutes, 20 minutes, you can't sit still. You decide to wait outside. It's over, the lights go up, and the door swings open. People rush by. "Interesting." "I've got to get to another screening." "Call me."

Others stand and talk with you. "What rights are available?" they ask. You answer as many questions as you can and hand out more press kits. By tomorrow the IFFM office will have a list ready of all the buyers at the screening. With only a few days left, you start to relax. More cards, more contact, more parties. The market is almost over. You start exchanging war stories with other filmmakers.

Already planning your priorities for follow-up, the glass doors shut behind you. Time to shake off the day and head home.

*Amy Beer is a sales and marketing specialist with Allied Film and Video, a film lab and duplication facility. She has attended the last three IFFMs as a volunteer, buyer liaison, and film rep.*

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## THE BIG PICTURE

### 1990 World Wide Video Festival

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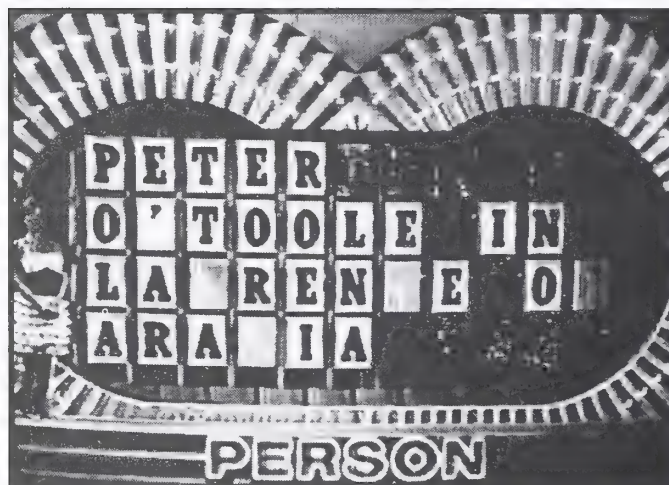
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A name like World Wide Video Festival promises a lot. So much that one might be skeptical about this and other large scale events that flatten the globe into a uniform surface. A presumption of universal understanding without a more complex analysis of context and cultural identity is as misguided as it is romantic. This year's WWVF acknowledged national specificity in its section of 12 tapes from Brazil. But even this gesture was lost on the audience, since there was no contextualizing essay in the festival catalogue, no organized discussion, or any other effort to draw attention to this work.

*Speaking for Oneself... Speaking for Others*, by Jayce Salloum and Elia Suliman, critiques media representations of Palestinians' history and current struggles.

Courtesy videomakers



The ninth version of the WWVF took place in The Hague from September 27 to October 3 and delivered 93 titles from West and East Europe, North and South America, Africa, and Asia. Special events included a video/dance installation by Tanja den Broeders, postscreening interviews with many of the videomakers, a talk on trends in video art by *Expanded Cinema* author Gene Youngblood, and a market with video distribution companies from a dozen countries.

Organized by Tom Van Vliet and Albert Wulfflers and held at the Kijkhuis, a spacious facility dedicated to video exhibition and distribution, the festival has a reputation for covering a range of styles within a fairly narrow conceptual organizing principle. Van Vliet and Wulfflers explained that they used personal taste as the basis for inclusion in the WWVF. Van Vliet added that what he looks for in work for the festival is "strong personal vision" as well as "quality, originality, and willfulness."

Due to this emphasis on personal expression,

collectively made work and productions that challenge notions of creativity and individual subjectivity were for the most part not to be found. So what did Van Vliet and Wulffler's taste offer?

Formalist experimentation and computer tricks were well represented, as were vignettes of personal angst and charming narratives. A certain line of investigation, however, could be delineated in a series of provocative tapes. Friederike Anders' *Die Patriarchin*, a compelling 90-minute interview with four generations of German women, poses a version of history which is intimate but not merely anecdotal. The stories told in Anders' tape echo with the tragedy, pain, and hope of lives constantly manipulated by national and international politics. History is presented as the experience of individuals lived within limits imposed by the exercise of State power.

*Belladonna*, an unusual collaboration by Beth B and her mother, painter Ida Applebroog, similarly provides a complex version of history. Using texts from famous and infamous authors Sigmund Freud, Josef Mengele, and Joel Steinberg, *Belladonna* evokes an emotional memory/history of love, cruelty, and resentment. The tape's narration is provided by three fathers: the father of psychoanalysis, the symbolic father of Nazi death camps, and an adopted father of a murdered child. The composite testimony of this trio reveals the violence of patriarchal social order. Here, history is presented in a collage of case histories exposing the perversions of paternal power.

Steve Fagin's *The Machine That Killed Bad People* poses yet another model of history—history as spectacle. In a two-hour tableau based on the media image of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos, Fagin questions the codes of realism and suggests that the story of the Marcos family and the Philippines is simultaneously constructed and obscured by media distortion. Part CNN-style documentary, part mini-series, and part performance art, *The Machine That Killed Bad People* embraces spectacle as the process by which we in the West identify and understand other cultures, events of history, even ourselves.

Yet another video with a historical bent was Hungarian videomaker Péter Forgács' *The Father and His Three Sons: The Bartos Family*, which won the festival's competition. This 60-minute work is the product of Forgács' editing of five hours of home movies of an upper-class Hungarian family, material spanning the 1930s to the fifties. According to the festival catalogue, Forgács



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made "no attempt to achieve a 'style,' only to record everyday life." The results are a nostalgic depiction that ignores so many of the circumstances during a tumultuous period. At a time when European history is undergoing rigorous evaluation, this tape was a curious choice for the festival's sole cash prize.

Conversely, Elia Suleiman and Jayce Salloum's (*Introduction to the end of an argument*) *Speaking for oneself...Speaking for others...* offers a critique of how moving images produced by the mass media and individual artist-producers construct biased representations of a national group—Palestinians—that serves the interests of more powerful groups. In this case, history is not rendered nostalgic. Rather, official history reveals itself as an order fabricated to serve the ambitions and religious interests of the wealthy and powerful.

Sexuality took familiar forms in the festival. Only Julie Zando and Jo Anstey's *The Bus Stops Here: 3 Case Histories*, Abigail Child's *Swamp*, and Josef Robakowski's *Effleurements* treated sex as anything other than heterosexual and male-centered. All the recent work done around gay and lesbian identity and the challenging activist studies of the AIDS crisis were absent from the festival. In this regard, Van Vliet and Wulfflers' criteria of individual expression and quality led them to omit what, in the United States at least, figures as one of the most significant developments in independent video.

On the other hand, uncritical representations of naked female bodies abounded in the festival selections. In an interview following the screening of her tape *We*, Shelly Silver observed that her work was the festival's only explicit sexual depiction of the male body. Her comment was casually dismissed by Jan Middendorp, the festival's official interviewer, who countered that the female body has long been the subject of scrutiny for the European avant garde. Because Silver's tape imaged a sexual male body, it shocked Middendorp and led him to accuse her of lurid intent while defending female nudity in other tapes as exercises in artistic inquiry.

The festival jury—curator Chris Dercon, videomakers Marcello Dantas and Maria Vedder—awarded 5,000 Guilders (around \$3,000) to Forgács' *The Father and His Three Sons* but didn't survive its own deliberations. Vedder was unable to support Forgács' tape and resigned, announcing she would have preferred Ken Kobland's *Foto-Roman*, a poetic treatment of travel and waiting, with a voiceover by Vito Acconci.

Their dissent was amplified by dismay expressed by many of the videomakers in attendance when they were informed that Van Vliet and Wulfflers had preselected 25 of the 93 festival tapes for the competition. Their catalogue introduction explained that their process was "arbitrary," but they failed to inform videomakers of the method or the resulting short list. Although the

WWVF may be forgiven for seeking a practical solution to the problem of having a jury review dozens of hours of work thoroughly and fairly, the preselection process was not exactly arbitrary and amounted to a hierarchy of value. In conversation Van Vliet told me that the tapes selected for the competition were, in his words, "the strongest" (works awarded prizes at other festivals were automatically excluded). Given this criteria, why, then, did only one tape from Japan and one from Brazil—out of 14 tapes from Asia, Africa, and Latin America—end up in the competition? Although the festival demonstrated its commitment to work by groups and individuals who work outside the established European and North American avant garde, highlighting work from Brazil and promising that next year's festival will survey work from Asia, more than worthy intentions are required to merit the title World Wide.

Despite these rather substantial concerns, the administration and execution of the 1990 WWVF was successful. The screening facility and well organized schedule permitted both the chance to question videomakers at formal screenings as well as the option to watch tapes on private monitors. Additionally, the festival was attended by many producers, curators, distributors, and festival organizers from North America and Europe. The festival administrators offered generous financial assistance to the videomakers for transportation and hotel accommodations, making the WWVF quite accessible to these artists. However, little effort seemed to be expended to attract people from the local community; consequently very few natives of The Hague attended.

The ninth World Wide Video Festival was a mixed bag of misdirected gestures of inclusiveness and accidental moments of insight. Personal taste guiding an international survey of video proved to be an insufficient criterion to provide an accurate index of significant independent production from communities other than those populated by established video artists. Deeper concentration on how video is developing in all sorts of communities is needed to make this a truly world wide festival.

Chris Hoover is freelance writer, videomaker, and curator currently working with Paper Tiger Television and the Video Data Bank.

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## AN EPIC OF AN EPOCH

Ken Burns Discusses *The Civil War*

ROB EDELMAN

"What I do is I tell history, but as a story," says Burns. "I don't want to tell it didactically or analytically, or just politically. I clearly have political sympathies and ideas and points of view, but I don't wish the engines of my films to be driven by them."

With his 11-hour documentary history, *The Civil War*, Ken Burns has achieved every independent filmmaker's dream. The series, budgeted at \$3.2-million, received major underwriting and promotion support from General Motors. Burns had total control over the content of the historical series, which premiered this past September in primetime over five consecutive evenings on PBS stations nationwide.

*The Civil War* received reams of advance publicity and laudatory reviews. Walter Goodman in the *New York Times* wrote that "[Burns] takes his place as the most accomplished documentary maker of his generation." *Variety* called *The Civil War* "a masterful, compelling achievement." Harry F. Waters declared in *Newsweek* that the series "qualifies as a kind of video miracle...it takes the nation's most cataclysmic act of self-definition and brings it hauntingly and wondrously alive." Syndicated columnist David Broder noted, "Beyond the artistic merit... [the] epic brought a message about the cost of war that could not be more timely, as the United States approaches a moment of decision in the Persian Gulf." Finally, on the Tuesday after the airing, the *New York Times* headlined, "*Civil War* Sets an Audience Record for PBS." The series averaged a nine Nielsen rating and 13 share in America's 24 largest television markets. This, according to the *Times*, was a 345 percent increase over the previous week's PBS programming.

It took Burns five years to complete the series—one year longer than it took to fight the Civil War. In an early October telephone interview from his home in Walpole, New Hampshire, the 36-year-old filmmaker described his success at bringing the series to fruition in a word—perseverance. "I made my case well," he said, "and did it consistently and persistently."

"The series was showcased as it was," continued Burns, whose other documentaries include *Brooklyn Bridge*, *Huey Long*, and *The Statue of Liberty*, "because I worked very hard to insure that it happened. There were several columns written saying what a big mistake this [series] would be for PBS. They're now eating their words." Indeed, *TV Guide* reported, "When PBS announced it would kick off its fall season with a documentary...we were frankly skeptical. How many viewers would choose to immerse themselves in American history rather than sample highly touted network newcomers like NBC's *Fresh Prince of Bel Air*, CBS's *Uncle Buck*, and

ABC's *Cop Rock*? The risk was rewarded, however, with a record-breaking audience...which just goes to prove that sometimes it pays to be revolutionary."

Added Burns, "The General Motors support was instrumental in raising the awareness across the country of the series' existence. But I think what's really clear is that not only [General Motors] delivered [the audience], but the program kept them there. They stayed with it; they abandoned plans they'd had for the week, literally. People were moved, because of the quality of the program."

Other filmmakers may have high quality documentaries, but they're not going to end up with the media exposure enjoyed by *The Civil War*. Why Ken Burns' film, and not someone else's? "I think that, in the case of documentaries, there are flavors of the year. The media seems to [embrace] one documentary a year for popular consumption. We've seen in the past *The Thin Blue Line* or *Roger and Me*. I think that in the case of *The Civil War* [there is] a bit of that flavor, but I think the critics were from the very beginning blown away by it. And the public had the same response," explained Burns.

*The Civil War*, as Burns' other works, is as enjoyable aesthetically as it is informational. "What I do is I tell history, but as a story," he continued. "I don't want to tell it didactically or analytically, or just politically. I clearly have political sympathies and ideas and points of view, but I don't wish the engines of my films to be driven by them." He added, "Michael Moore's film is funny, and, as good as it is, it essentially is one-note. I wish [my films] to have chords and resonances."

Burns is emphatic in his assertion that General Motors' participation in *The Civil War* was not an attempt to counteract the bad publicity it received from *Roger and Me*. "Their commitment in every aspect of this film was years before *Roger and Me* came out," he said. "In fact, if there's a flaw to *Roger and Me*, it's how narrow-minded it is. It just sees GM as monolithic, period. I mean, [GM has] given away millions of dollars in support of something in which they asked for absolutely no control. Never once did the subject of [*Roger and Me*] come up. They're interested, sincerely, in good history. They're now supporting my history of baseball. And I'm honored to have their support."

Burns also managed to secure a meaty book deal. The 425-page *Civil War: An Illustrated*



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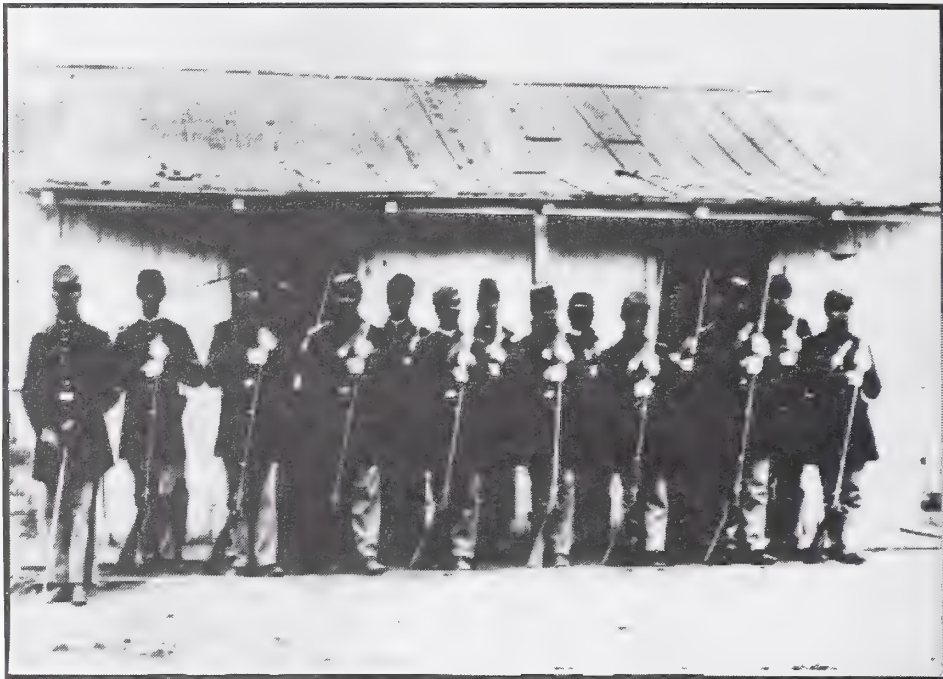
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*History*, by Geoffrey C. Ward, with Ken Burns and Ric Burns (Ken's brother), was published by Alfred A. Knopf as his series premiered. "I had wanted to do a companion book that wasn't just a pale version of the film," Burns observed. "I wanted to do something which in this case would replace what had been the single-volume bible of the Civil War, a book written by Bruce Catton called *The Pictorial History of the Civil War*. This was revolutionary in its time, but I wanted to replace it. It had become old and dated, because for one thing it does not reflect new scholarship about the incredibly heroic role of blacks throughout the war. I wanted the book to contain that, but I also wanted it to be visually stunning."

Burns is highly critical of the approach that many documentary filmmakers bring to their work. And he has much to say on the subject. "Docu-

mentaries, it seems to me, mostly run at a terrible deficit because they attempt to run on only one cylinder, to be an expression of already-arrived-at ends. Or [they attempt] to hoe a narrow political furrow, however honorable or correct—and please put the word correct in quotes. [I] believe that the documentary is an art form, not merely a form of journalistic expression. We don't ask too much of ourselves in documentary films. And I think we need to ask more, to use more of the brain, you know, than what we normally use. We need to demand of it that it be a work of art.... When you do that, people respond."

Just because it's a documentary, Burns believes that a film should not be excused from what he calls "the rigorous application of the art of film." He added, "If you hold yourself accountable to [this art], if the process of making a film is





Above: Members of the 107th Colored Infantry line up at Fort Corcoran in Washington D.C. By the end of the Civil War, 185,000 black men had enlisted in the Union army, a stunning 85 percent of those eligible to fight. Ken Burns' *The Civil War* reflects the new scholarship that addresses the role of blacks in the war.

Courtesy Owen Comara Associates

Below: General Motors footed a good part of the bill for *The Civil War*, including the cost of publicity. This and PBS's new interest in promoting its fall line-up helped attract a record-breaking audience.

Courtesy Owen Comara Associates

a process of discovery, if it seems more than its own biases, then you will have taken a step towards making a good film."

Additionally, Burns believes that documentary filmmakers are too often overly eager to take on unnecessary battles to get their films made and seen. "I find in the documentary community an almost knee-jerk desire to sort of create barriers and divisions, to assume that there are enemies out there," he noted. "There *are* enemies out there, but they're not as [pervasive] as we tend to think. I found that, by pursuing as quietly as possible my own work, I accomplish a lot more—and I don't need to create the political divisions against CPB, against PBS, against corporations."

"I am not naive," he stressed, "and I am not unaware of the dangers [of making documentaries]. And I don't take any shit. I don't allow anyone to influence my content. But at the same time I'm not paranoid about it. And I think there's a sort of defensive reaction, in which that paranoia replaces the artistic, scholarly, and really just human responsibilities that we have to our subjects."

"And sometimes we trade what is very difficult, hard work for ourselves for that kind of knee-jerk, 'Oh, well, I didn't get funded because they're out to get me,' or, 'They don't like independents,' or, 'They're against minorities,' or whatever. I've found that usually when I don't get funded it's because I didn't do a good job in making the case for my subject. And I redouble my efforts to do better."

Burns is quick to follow all this by saying that he is "sorry to sound so conservative. I'm not. I'm politically very, very left-wing. But I'm artistically trying to be honest. That's my goal. I don't always succeed, but I'm always trying."

Rob Edelman is contributing editor of Leonard Maltin's TV Movies and Video Guide.

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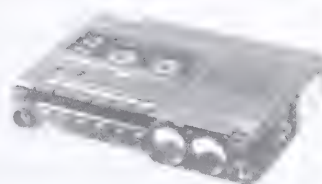
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## CIVIL SKIRMISHES

Mark Kitchell on *Berkeley in the Sixties*

JANICE DRICKEY

To the maxim, those who do not study history are condemned to repeat it, filmmaker Mark Kitchell is likely to respond, "We can only hope." The 38-year-old fundraiser, writer, producer, director, and distributor of *Berkeley in the Sixties* nurses a fervent and not so secret ambition: that his 117-minute paean to a turbulent era of social and political change will "help light the fires of new movements" among the college generation of the record-labeling, anti-flag-burning nineties.

Kitchell has structured his documentary around three milestones born from the unrest on the University of California campus in Berkeley—the 1964 Free Speech Movement, Stop the Draft Week in 1967, and People's Park in 1969. On either side of these events, he sketches the growing Civil Rights Movement, the rise of the Black Panthers, the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago, the appearance of the counterculture, the emergence of the Women's Liberation Movement, and the Third World Strikes. "There were so many events," Kitchell admits from his office at Fantasy Recording Studios in Berkeley. "We have huge scenes that we put together in the rough cut that we just, wholesale, lifted out of the film and in their places put a couple seconds narration and brief little stories."

The film juxtaposes archival footage from news files, personal collections, and other compilation documentaries with on-camera interviews with 15 activists who participated in—and sometimes led—various aspects of the movements. Interviewees include civil rights activist Jack Weinberg, whose arrest sparked the Free Speech Movement; Jentri Anders, who moved from housewife to activist, left Berkeley at the height of the violence to join a commune, and wrote the book *Beyond Counter-Culture* about her experiences; John Gage, an all-American swimmer who organized anti-war moratoriums in 1969 and worked on Robert Kennedy's presidential campaign; Frank Bardacke, one of the organizers of Stop the Draft Week; Jackie Goldberg, a sorority member who became one of the leaders of the Free Speech Movement and now heads the Los Angeles Board of Education; Ruth Rosen, now a professor of history at UC Davis; and Bobby Seale, cofounder of the Black Panthers who was put on trial for conspiracy in Chicago and now teaches at Temple University.

"I was trying to get individual journeys of change that covered the whole breadth of the sixties," Kitchell explains. "I didn't ask them questions, just filled in an area and said, 'Do you

Mark Kitchell's *Berkeley in the Sixties* recounts the era of widespread social unrest, from the Free Speech Movement of 1964 to the People's Park takeover in 1969.

Photo: Don Kechely





remember...?" The filmed results, tempered by time and maturity, provide a fascinating analysis—by those who participated—of what happened, what worked, and what went wrong within the movements.

Key players in the archival footage also define the era, most particularly Mario Savio, leader of the Free Speech Movement. After screening a rough cut of the picture, Savio agreed to appear on camera only if a committee could be appointed to make decisions about the film's content. Kitchell rejected the condition and lost Savio's participation in the film. At the Berkeley premiere, Kitchell says, Savio acknowledged that the film had turned out "as well as he could have hoped, and that he had been wrong not to trust me."

After graduating from New York University film school in 1976, working in commercial film production in Los Angeles, and becoming "utterly frustrated with writing screenplays and trying to succeed in that whole Hollywood system," Kitchell decided in 1981 to return to documentary—"what I had known and loved in film school." Growing up in San Francisco during the sixties and marching with his parents to protest the war provided Kitchell with a "deep, personal motivation" for his choice of subject matter.

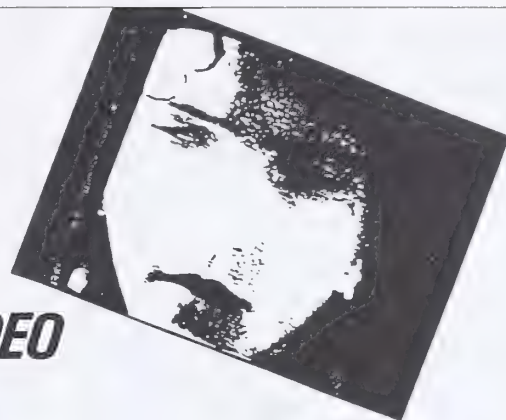
"I was making a film about the forces that formed me," he explains. "It was a chance to go back and really explore them and live them out with the people who made the events, the movements." Moments later, he admits, "On one level it was a crass, commercial decision, in that it would make a great film that a lot of people would be interested in seeing. And there was all that fabulous footage. It was a good story. Then you start to fill in all the motivations and the motives."

Kitchell spent four months in Berkeley, gathering material on the sixties, writing down ideas, and exploring existing avenues of funding. "There was a point at the beginning in which I got turned down by every major public funding agency in the country," he recalls. "I considered dropping it before I'd even gotten started." Instead, he moved to Berkeley from Los Angeles in January 1984 and began grassroots fundraising. Forming a partnership, he solicited investors at a minimum \$2,500 a share, coming up with half a dozen backers. "I had to have at least \$65,000 before I could spend any of that, so it went into escrow," he said. "Meanwhile, I was raising \$25 at a time."

Nineteen months later, he had the \$70,000 he needed to begin. Six interviews were filmed, at three hours apiece (all the budget would allow), and a team of 20 volunteers combed through miles of archival footage from the period. Kitchell and editor Veronica Selver began work on a rough cut in October 1986. A year later, he toled a three-and-a-quarter-hour version to the Independent Feature Market in New York City but was unable to find a distributor for the project. A completed rough cut was then shown at the Pacific Film Archive in January of 1988.

"We were pursuing three modes of completion

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**A protester is throttled in Oakland during Stop the Draft Week in 1967, one of the major milestones around which Kitchell structures his documentary.**

Photo: Jeffrey Blankfort

money from public television—NEH (National Endowment for the Humanities), CPB (Corporation for Public Broadcasting), and *American Experience*,” Kitchell says, “and all three turned me down. At that point my whole staff either quit or quit temporarily until I could get myself out of the hole. It took me more than six months to grassroots fundraise and get moving again. Of course, I was too far down the road at that point to stop.” Kitchell and new associate producer Kevin Pina mounted a fundraiser in Los Angeles which he says was “good and successful,” thanks in large part to the help of Medical Aid to El Salvador. (Proceeds from the September 19 opening of *Berkeley* at the Nuart Theater in Los Angeles went to that organization.)

Prior to shooting another dozen interviews, Kitchell and Selver worked with their advisors and filmmaking colleagues to shape the film's structure and create a two-hour fine cut. The filmmaker returned to the Independent Feature Market in 1989 and collared Marc Weiss, producer of the public television documentary series *P.O.V.*, in the hallway. “He did something he's never done before,” Kitchell says admiringly. “He committed to the film and he didn't have his funding; he didn't have a committee.” With finishing funds provided by *P.O.V.*, Kitchell was able to complete the film in January 1990.

His greatest production challenge, he says, was finding a place in the film to document the early years of the Women's Movement. It was a period in history, he contends, that lacked archival film and was not demarcated by events. After an unsuccessful attempt to tack the movement onto the end of the film, Kitchell brought together women who were important to a particular phase of the sixties for a recreation of a consciousness-raising group. That idea also refused to fly, and the segment was dropped.

While working feverishly to get *Berkeley* ready for its premiere at the 1990 United States Film Festival in Park City, Utah, Kitchell received a telephone call from Ruth Rosen, one of the film's advisors. “Ruth called me up, saying, ‘Mark, where's the Women's Movement?’” he recalls with a grin. A crisis meeting resulted, and the Women's Movement became part of what Kitchell calls “the mood of '68 scene.” “It's the only scene in the film not driven by events,” he explains. “We're sketching everything from revolutionary expectations, to worldwide unrest, to Chicago, to the Third World Strikes. In things like





the counterculture, the Panthers, or the Women's Movement," he continues, "the challenge was clearly to relate it to the main strand of the film which is, what is its relationship to Berkeley, to the white student movement?"

*Berkeley in the Sixties* went on to win the Audience Award for Best Documentary at Park City. *P.O.V.*'s Weiss offered to give Kitchell a "theatrical window" if a suitable offer for theatrical distribution resulted from the festival screenings. The few offers that were tendered, however, did not pan out. A month later, the film garnered kudos at the Berlin Film Festival, but still no distributor would commit. "I've come to feel that it goes beyond being a politically difficult thing to support," Kitchell said. "It's just plain, old, too messy. The sixties are messy and unresolved and, if you're really true to the time, you're going to press people's buttons. It's a lot easier to fund civil rights than those white middle-class radicals with their ambivalent motivations."

The pressure was on from *P.O.V.* to announce *Berkeley in the Sixties* as part of their third season. As Kitchell worked desperately to forestall that announcement, Weiss took another gamble and agreed to delay exhibition one year, until June 1991. Kitchell then decided to distribute the film himself. California Newsreel has taken on *Berkeley*'s educational distribution, Producers Services is handling foreign sales, and Kitchell has returned to fundraising to pay for prints and promotional material for a national theatrical release. So far, there are 16 theatrical bookings around the country and 16 pending engagements. In all, Kitchell received approximately \$40,000 in grants and no public television funding, except for the *P.O.V.* sale. He received one "tiny, little state humanities grant" and no NEA or NEH funding.

Fantasy deferred rental fees for \$30,000 worth of facilities and equipment, to be paid back out of the proceeds of the film. "There's a real price to pay for doing a film as independent as I did," Kitchell admits. "I started down the road figuring that, if nothing else, I would depend on grassroots fundraising. And, boy, I really made my bed and had to lie in it!"

Kitchell thinks of *Berkeley* as a Rorschach test, from which people derive different interpretations. He considers calls for more balance in the film "a stupid concern." He remarks, "The discussion going on within the movement about what it's about and what way it should go is much more interesting and enlightening than having some sorority girl say, 'I agreed with the goals of the Free Speech Movement, but it was disruptive.'" Though he says he should try something lighter after *Berkeley*, Kitchell admits, "Already I'm a step or two into the next project [an exploration of our attitudes and values concerning garbage], which is just as big and ambitious. If anything, it's going to be harder."

In between fundraising efforts and a new family (he became a father during production and has a second child on the way), Kitchell is finding time to enjoy audience reactions to *Berkeley in the Sixties* as it opens across the country. "We were trying to make it for both the 20-year-olds and the 40-year-olds, but we always knew that our first responsibility had to be to the 20-year-olds, the students of today," he says. "I feel proud that we were able to make a film that appeals to both."

*Janice Drickey is a freelance writer in northern California.*

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# Inside Out and Upside Down

## Brazilian Video Groups: TVDO and Olhar Eletronico

ARLINDO MACHADO

IF IT WERE POSSIBLE TO COUNT THE SOURCES OF TALENT, WHETHER individual talent or the talent of groups, that constitute the wave of independent video production in Brazil, they might add up to about one hundred. Other generations have regarded—at times still regard—television as branded by some kind of original sin, condemned to incarnate the structures of power of a modern technological society. Yet young Brazilian videomakers have put their faith in the possibility of making television in a different guise: more creative, more democratic. They have kept alive the hope that the electronic media, with all their immense capacity for technical intervention, may come to express the emergence of a new sensibility. In the understanding of this generation, the videocassette allows television to declare its independence from political and economic powers. The potential of television as a system of expression may then be exploited by a generation of videomakers who are disposed to transform the electronic image into a fact of the culture of our time.

This television—daring, creative—has often brought into the limelight themes which are disquieting, disturbing, and for a long time found no place in television as it is commonly conceived. Independent production was systematically ignored, although, paradoxically, it was perfectly suited to the small screen, accurately used the forms of television, and took every advantage of the electronic resources of the studio. Yet in Brazil, the constructive possibilities of television could only be investigated outside television, on alternative—and closed—circuits.

However, the fact of independent video being thus outlawed gave it greater intensity. It was less entangled with the centralized of interests or with the high capital costs of broadcast television. It was produced and distributed outside official circuits and was able to invest in television's cultural function, experimenting with electronic languages, acting as a sounding board for the grave social problems of the country, seeking to express the deepest malaise of our time. In this sense video has been able to serve a vanguard role, in the productive meaning of that term: to open up new horizons, explore new paths, try out new functions, turn back the authority-based relationship between producer and viewer. The effect has been to force progress in television as a conventional institution, excessively inhibited as it is by the weight of the interests at stake.

### TVDO: Things Inside Out

It would be impossible to cover every one of the most important independent video groups active in Brazil during the eighties. Here we shall look at just

Videomaker Walter Silveira appears in *Nom Plus Ultra*, which borrows techniques from music video. The TVDO tape fragments images of national identity into a disconnected mosaic, held together only by a musical notion of rhythm.

Courtesy TVDO

two such fields of experience, among the most fertile and that have achieved the widest following. The first, TVDO, is linked strictly with avant-garde circles in São Paulo and surfaced during the early eighties with new ideas that have had considerable impact.

TVDO has represented perhaps the best translation into electronic media of the demolishing and anarchical spirit shown in the cinema of Glauber Rocha. TVDO began with what we might call inside-out reporting, that is, works of a supposedly documentary nature which, instead of concentrating on what is apparently the central event as normal broadcast TV would, focus on peripheral aspects which are usually ignored. For example: a football match where the camera seeks out not the players and the movements of the game but the behavior of the crowd (*Teleshow de Bola*, 1983); a rock concert where the true spectacle is provided by the fans, the people engaged in selling refreshments, souvenirs, and black market tickets, anonymous minor singers, indeed, anything but the rock band from the States (*Quem Kiss TV*, 1983).

This approach to turning spectacle inside out, as it were, runs right through the group's work. In a certain sense, it is an incarnation of the grotesque realism of which Mikhail Bakhtin speaks in the context of carnival culture. Here we see the inverted reality of the carnivalesque, parallel to what is recognized by authority, where the scene is dominated by cynicism, grossness, obscenity, heresy, and parody. This then enables an alternative view of the world, one not shackled by civilization, open and sensitive to the relative nature of values and the circumstantial nature of power and knowledge.

The TVDO group has also been responsible for highly radical experiments in terms of formal invention and renewal of the expressive qualities of video. The most extreme example of this is *VT Preparado AC/JC* (*Prepared Video AC/JC*, 1986), by Pedro Vieira and Walter Silveira. This is a passionate act of homage to the composer of silence (JC is John Cage) and the poet of the blank page (AC is Augusto de Campos). In this tape the







Actress Maria Alice Vergueiro in *Nom Plus Ultra*.

Courtesy TVDO

Ostensibly a record of a popular religious festival, TVDO's *Caipira In* becomes a reflection on the deforming presence of the videomakers and the distance between their cultures and that of their subject.

Courtesy TVDO



blank screen predominates; on occasion, extremely rapidly flashing pulses and distortions generated by the equipment itself, with the pixels of the TV screen made visible through a process of exaggeration. *VT Preparado* might be seen as a radicalization of the formal proposition underlying an earlier work by the group Olhar Eletrônico, *Brasília* (1983), where long intervals showing only a blank screen ruin the stereotyped images of the city in which the country's political power is concentrated. Both *VT Preparado* and *Brasília* are primarily portrayed at the level of sound, rather than image, making the tape unsuitable for broadcast over normal television channels.

In stylistic terms, the most explicit reference in the works of the TVDO group is music video. But what the group absorbed from this genre is its principle of composition, rather than the format, which is generally quite rigid. Music videos are distinguished from the "prose" of cinema because they scrap the narrative basis of audiovisual syntax and replace it with image sequences with no immediate relationship to each other and no overt denotative function. As videomaker Walter Salles, Jr. remarked, what we find in most music videos is "a non-narrative, non-linear form known in the USA as 'non-associative imagery.'" What matters is not so much the need to tell a story, and more the desire to provide an overdose of sensations by way of non-related information accompanied by sounds in time to the rhythms of the images." Dissociated images, a collage of styles, make up heterogeneous mosaics of unrelated material. In these terms one might describe the constructive process of TVDO as it appears in an exemplary work, a summation of sorts of the fragmentary universe suggested by the group, *Nom Plus Ultra* (1985), directed by Tadeu Jungle.

*Nom Plus Ultra* is a veritable tropical salad, with performances by actors, interviews with politicians and artists, fragments from plays, pseudo-reporting from the streets, quasi-music videos with groups from the Brazilian artistic scene, shouts, chickens, shantytowns, bananas, the sea, people of Pentecostal religions speaking in tongues—with no connection between them except for a purely musical notion of rhythm. This radical fragmentation is the reply of a new generation to attempts by their predecessors at forging a historical totality and teleological synthesis necessary to the utopian project of constructing a "national identity." Now the spirit of parody and cynical humor corrodes everything—populist rural "roots" and "imported" urban values, jingoist tropical nationalism and predatory cosmopolitanism, grotesqueries of mass culture and mustiness of the remains of the erudite. Since video can explain nothing further, *Nom Plus Ultra* radicalizes the experience of dispersion and doubt.

## A New Anthropology

For an accurate assessment of the cultural contribution made by independent video in Brazil, one would have to identify what is different in its way

of looking at the country and its people. For a long time Brazilians were shown as exotic objects examined through the eyes of a voyeur. Internally this was the result of patronizing populist aesthetics and, externally, of what might be called an inside-out colonialist mentality, corroded by a feeling of commiseration. In cinema and television, the camera always sought to construct a particular image of Brazil, rural and wretched on the one hand, yet bucolic and folkloric on the other.

For years, decades even, there was a fascination with the iconography of misery and local color. The cameras invaded the privacy of the humble, and without asking permission or paying for their participation, kidnapped their images for use in demagoguery, or with a view to making misery aesthetically acceptable. The photographer, the cinematographer, arrived as it were by parachute in the middle of a desolate landscape and, without taking the trouble to understand the reality that was his object, without cultivating more intimate contact with the people in front of his lens, began to shoot, to make a record of events. The world of the "other" was conceived as a ready-made whole, prepared for observation and representation in such a way that there was no difficulty, no complexity that might interfere with its viewpoint.

In more recent years a different mentality has arisen among the makers of documentaries, a different way of looking at Brazil and Brazilians. In cinema this appears in the painful self-criticism of populist instrumentalism, as carried out, for example, by Eduardo Coutinho in his vigorous production *Cabra Marcado para Morrer* (*A Goat Marked Out for Death*, 1984), or in anti-documentary shorts which refuse to take over, lock, stock, and barrel, the image of the "other." Outstanding among these are the parody *Congo* (1972), by Arthur Omar, and the corrosive *Mato Eles?* (*Shall I Kill Them?*, 1983), by Sergio Bianchi.

But it is the videomakers who give weight to a different anthropology and try out other possible relationships between the speaking subject and what is represented. This generation rejects full-blown representations of the



Olhar Eletronico invented the character of Ernesto Varela, a bungling, ill-informed, and ingenuous journalist, to comment on the aseptic star reporters in Brazil. In *Ernesto Varela em Serra Pelada*, he goes to the gold mines of Serra Pelada.

Courtesy Olhar Eletronico



whole; its doubts are rendered perfectly explicit, it declares the partiality of intervention, it enquires about the limits of the meaningful gesture and the ability to know the "other." One who points a camera towards the other is not necessarily in a position of privilege. As a producer of meanings, s/he no longer has authority to tell the entire truth about what is shown nor is able to impose the fantasy of coherence on the culture. Nor are videomakers absent from the text, nor do they hide behind the camera in such a way as to suggest a supposed neutrality. The production of meanings and the legibility of new video products now depends on the ability to create new relationships between the various parts in question. This project is less to tell the truth about the "other," a revelation or translation into our canons of intelligibility, than it is an attempt to bridge two cultures so that there may at last be dialogue between them.

There are different ways of going about this. *Caipira In (Local Groove, 1987)*, a disconcerting work by Roberto Sandoval, Tadeu Jungle, and Walter Silveira (the latter two members of TVDO), demonstrates one. At first sight the tape looks like yet another work concerned with the preservation of popular culture, commissioned by an official body for its archive or recorded as a trace of the national heritage. The apparent concept is to document a popular religious festival that takes place every year in the small town of São Luis do Paraitinga, in the state of São Paulo. Yet the video denies the recording function of the camera. It establishes a distance between subject and object, between observer and observed, almost entirely wiping out the voices and the statements of those with whom it is concerned. Electronic studio effects contaminate the *in loco* imagery, the montage frustrates any coherent explanation of the event, and even the sounds recorded during the festivities are electronically processed so that they become pale vestiges of audio verité.

*Caipira In* is less a documentary about a popular festival than a reflection on the distance between two irreconcilable cultures—or, more exactly, a demonstration of our inability to live the experience of the "other" as such. The makers interfere. They have no hesitation in displaying themselves as a deforming presence. When they focus on the culture of the "other," they do not deny themselves; they do not renounce their own world, nor their own values, their own culture. They do not try to dissolve themselves in that "other." No pretensions of objectivity conceal the fact that the subject in the performance, upon coming face to face with someone else's festivities, brings along one's own world, history, and cultural points of reference. Using these as a starting point, as well as a filter, they approach the "other." Thus *Caipira In* becomes a report upon this distance, a declaration of being conscious of it, a questioning of the entry of an analyst, an interpreter, into a reality which is not hers or his. The tape serves as a deconstruction of documentary illusion, in which the intervention of the speaking subject becomes a criticism of the ability to represent reality.

Even so, it could be said of *Caipira In* that the presence of the speaking subject remains excessive. The difference between the two cultures, the impossibility of assessing one being by the criteria of another, is extremely lucid in the tape, yet the work falls into a relativism from which there is no escape and which does not take long to reveal its cynical side. Once the

difference between I and the "other" is so radically marked, any contact with the experience of another culture becomes *a priori* impossible, hence the difficulty of imagining a strategy which might allow one culture to approach another and communicate with its counterpart. The question which remains unresolved in a video like *Caipira In* is just that: Once checkmate is reached in documentary production and television journalism (in the common senses of those words), how can one imagine a new strategy for bridge building between cultures?

## Another Direction: Olhar Eletronico

Another group of videomakers in Brazil attempts to answer this question, but they follow a path very different from that of TVDO. What Olhar Eletronico seeks is no longer a radical separation, but rather a negotiation, an exchange, the possibility of dialogue, an exercise in polyphony that allows voices to be heard in all their multiplicity. Yet this process is less simple than it may seem at first sight, for communication between different cultures is already inflected by inequality and power: one of the conflicting sides lacks the instruments and the know-how to be able to carry through the dialogue under conditions of equality.

Even so, in their works of greater consequence, Olhar Eletronico strives to rupture any relationship based on knowledge or authority that may exist between the makers and the object in focus, not superimposing on the images of the latter any supposed discourse of truth, instead creating devices whereby the latter may reply to the enquiries of the former. Fundamentally, the group does this by inverting the addictive schemes of reporting used by commercial TV networks, which reduce the ideological, cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and religious diversity of the inhabitants of the entire country to a single integrated normative discourse—the discourse of institutionalized television.

To let the people speak for themselves, to let the object of attention express her or himself freely, to make the techniques of production transparent to the protagonists—these are some of the guiding principles in the work of Olhar Eletronico. They may be identified, as an example, in *Do Outro Lado de sua Casa (From the Other Side of Your House, 1986)*, in which Marcelo Machado, Renato Barbieri, and Paulo Morelli examine the daily lives of a group of down-and-out men and women, more or less outcasts from society. But here we find none of the feeling of commiseration or guilt common to a particular Christian way of looking at the meek. On the contrary, as the video evolves, these indigent people begin to impose their own discourse and to express the reasons for their condition in their own way. One of them even ends up by taking the microphone in hand and directing the interviews with his companions. Thus, in a disturbing inver-





In *Do Outro Lado da Sua Casa* the country's poor speak for themselves, taking over the mic and the role as interviewer.

Courtesy Olhar Eletronico

Like TDVO, Olhar Eletronico makes formally innovative works, such as *Marli Normal*, which tells of a typist's daily routine through rapidly shifting planes and alternating rhythms.

Courtesy Olhar Eletronico



sion, the object of investigation takes his place behind the camera and also becomes the subject of the investigation, thus avoiding any approach which may be humiliating for the participants.

This form of approach is dear to the hearts of young videomakers, and it may be said that it is one of their most important victories. We find it again throughout the immense body of material collected by Andrea Tonacci among the Indians in the north of the country. We find it in some of the works of Rita Moreira, such as *A Dama do Pacaembu* (*The Lady of Pacaembu*, 1983), an interview with a poor woman who claims to hold a doctorate in psychology and who has some disconcerting things to say about economics, morals, and television, or *She Has a Beard* (made in New York in 1975 with Norma Pontes), a "documentary" about a bearded lady in which the protagonist, instead of appearing before the camera as the embarrassed object of the inquisitorial eyes of makers and spectators, goes behind the camera and questions women about why they reproduce the stereotyped patterns of feminine beauty.

This attitude is new in Brazil, and it has been shaped by independent video. New Brazilian Cinema, political heir to a long tradition of populism that left its mark on Brazil for about half a century, treated the people in a paternalistic manner without ever letting them speak for themselves about their problems. The multitude, reduced to misery, was shown by the filmmakers as an amorphous mass, destitute of inner life and of will (in the films of Ruy Guerra and Glauber Rocha, for example) or as a collection of individuals reduced to the simple state of animals (in films like *Vidas Secas*, 1963). It never passed through the heads of the filmmakers during those utopian times of New Cinema that simple people who had been humiliated could still be endowed with interior wealth and capable at times of asking questions which leave us dumb.

This is the directional change which may be observed in a video like *Do Outro Lado de sua Casa*. The poor and the wretched are no longer shown as flat personages, stylized, incapable of understanding and devoid of ambiguity. Now the truth appears as something much more complex than conceptual categories authorize us to understand.

In the search for a more productive relationship with the complex reality of Brazil, Olhar Eletronico invented the figure of a bungling anti-reporter called Ernesto Varela (played by Marcelo Tas), whose notorious ingenuousness permitted him to make an entirely new type of contact with the objects of the journalistic project. Varela is, at the same time, a corrosive parody of conventional television journalism, as well as a new proposal for journalism, in which the team attempts to get closer to the common person, to win his or her confidence and cooperation in such manner that s/he is better able to speak. Varela is informal, muddle-headed; he does not hide his ignorance about the subjects of his interviews and has to appeal constantly

for the intellectual support of the camera operator. The model for television in Brazil, with its aseptic and technically perfect programs, its shop-window-dummy presenters and its star reporters, more concerned with their own image than with the truth of their subject—this model he turns upside down.

Olhar Eletronico does not ignore formal innovation. Like TVDO, it was one of the groups which helped sweep the mildew out of the electronic media, in a search for bold solutions never before attempted in the routines of television. The group began by making extremely short tapes, three or four minutes in duration, in which they experimented with extremely concentrated language and exploited what the Americans call the machine gun cut. This is what they did, for example, in *Tempos* (*Times*, 1982), an electronic flickering of images pirated from TV and edited almost frame by frame. Again, in *Marli Normal* (1983), the daily routine of a typist is told on rapidly shifting planes and in alternating rhythms. This tape is thought by many to be Olhar Eletronico's best work.

At a later, more recent stage, and as social preoccupations came to assume greater dimensions, these formal procedures came to be used in less radical fashion by the group, in part because they were no longer pertinent to the group's projects. Even so, their works have always embodied the spirit of youth and an attitude of nonconformity towards the canons inherited from television and cinema. Indeed, some of the programs which they have introduced, such as *Crig-Ra* and *TV Mix* for TV Gazeta in São Paulo, and *Ra-tim-bum* for TV Cultura in the same city, have been greeted as moments of rupture within Brazilian television.

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# Visual Media, Cultural Politics and Anthropological Practice

TERENCE TURNER

*Editor's note: The first section of Terence Turner's article was published in the Spring 1990 issue of the Commission on Visual Anthropology Review\* and is reprinted here with the author's permission.*

THE KAYAPO, A GO-SPEAKING PEOPLE OF CENTRAL BRAZIL, HAVE become widely known in the last few years for their remarkably bold and successful actions in defense of their lands, rights, and environment.\*\* Audio-visual media have played a central role in these actions, not only in the usual forms of film, video, and television coverage by Brazilian and foreign crews, but also in that of video coverage by the Kayapo themselves using their own audiocassette recorders and video cameras. In this paper I discuss some implications of these uses of audio-visual media both for Kayapo culture and politics and for anthropological theory and practice.

The Kayapo presently are divided into 14 autonomous communities scattered over an area roughly the size of Great Britain. One of these communities, Gorotire, made peaceful contact with Brazilians 50 years ago; most of the others established peaceful relations during the 1950s. The first couple of decades of peaceful coexistence with Brazilian society brought the Kayapo the same array of catastrophes suffered by other Amazonian peoples under the same circumstances. Epidemics carried off a significant percentage of their population, large areas of their traditional lands were seized either by the state or private agents, and they were reduced to dependence on representatives of the alien dominant society for a variety of medical, technological, and economic needs.

Unlike some other Amazonian peoples, however, the Kayapo were able to maintain their traditional social institutions and ceremonial practices, and by the end of the 1960s they had begun to learn and take control of administrative, technological, and medical functions within their own communities. During the 1970s and eighties, Kayapo became paramedics, FUNAI (Brazilian Bureau of Indian Affairs) agents, motorboat, tractor, and truck operators and mechanics, radio operators, and even, in a couple of cases, missionaries, effectively recovering local control of all major points of dependency on the national society within their own communities. Their population had also begun to increase; the extant communities have by now reached the demographic level they had before the establishment of peaceful contact. Extensive tracts of lost territory have been reclaimed, in some

cases by protracted armed struggle. There occurred, in sum, a general resurgence of cultural self-confidence, social morale, and political will.

Throughout this period the Kayapo were visited by a number of anthropologists, journalists, and other outsiders, who introduced them to photography, film, audiocassette recorders, radio, and finally video cameras. At the same time, these visitors made the Kayapo aware that the outside world, beyond the limited circle of local Brazilian frontier society and national government officials, valued their culture and was generally inclined to support their political and land rights. The Kayapo also learned how audio and visual media had become a major channel of communication within this external world. Travel to Brazilian towns revealed the importance of media such as commercial radio, television, journalistic photography, and cinema in Western culture. Electronic audio and visual media, in short, appeared as a new technology of great power and strategic importance, which was at the same time directly accessible to nonliterate people like the Kayapo. The

Kayapo became interested in learning and acquiring this new technology and its associated power for themselves.

The first step was audiocassette recorders. By the mid 1970s, the Kayapo already owned numerous cassette decks, which they used to record and play back their own ceremonial performances and send com-

munications from one village to another. Then in 1985 three Brazilian researchers formed a project to introduce the Kayapo community of Gorotire to the use of video cameras and monitors. They gave a camcorder, videocassette recorder deck, and monitor to the village and trained some Kayapo in video photography. When I went to Gorotire in 1987 with a documentary film crew from Granada Television (UK) as anthropological consultant for a film in Granada's *Disappearing World* series, I brought a second camcorder for the Metuktire community of Kayapo, together with a VCR and TV monitor. Returning in January 1989 as anthropological consultant for a second *Disappearing World* film, I brought a third camcorder, which the Kayapo used to make their own video record of their demonstration at Altamira. Both of these video cameras, with their attendant batteries, VCR, monitor, and numerous blank videotapes, were paid for by Granada as part of the *quid pro quo* presented to the Kayapo for their cooperation in the filming.

The Kayapo have used their own capacity for video in a variety of ways: the documentation of their own traditional culture, above all ceremonial performances; secondly, the recording of important events and actions such as the Altamira demonstration or the capture of the gold mines of Maria Bonita and transactions with Brazilians, so as to have the equivalent of a legally binding transcript of business contracts or political agreements (for example, the negotiations of contracts with air taxi pilots for the supply of the captured gold mines); and thirdly, as an organizing tool. An example of the latter was the appeal of the assembled Kayapo chiefs for attendance at the Altamira demonstration, which was videotaped at the close of their planning meeting at Gorotire to be sent around to other Kayapo and non-Kayapo native communities (the basic message was spoken in Portuguese,

## Some Implications of Recent Uses of Film and Video Among the Kayapo of Brazil

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\*\* Turner 1987, 1989a, 1989b, 1989c, 1989d, n.d.1, n.d.2, n.d.3





The Kayapo, a people from the edge of the Amazon, have learned to take video into their own hands as a way of preserving their culture. After gold was discovered in 1982 on Kayapo land, one community seized the Maria Bonita mine from white Brazilians and now run the operation, taking a five percent share. Here villagers play back historically significant scenes of Kayapo warriors taking possession of the mine. From Granada Television's *Disappearing World: The Kayapo*.

Courtesy Granada Television Ltd.

followed by individual chiefs' appeals and exhortations in Kayapo).

More elaborate plans are currently being made for cultural self-documentation using video. The Kayapo leader, Payakan, has established a "Kayapo Foundation" (*Fundacao Mebengokre*), primarily concerned with setting up and running an "extractive reserve" within the Kayapo Indigenous Area. One of the projected activities of this foundation is to be a systematic program of documenting, on videotape, traditional Kayapo knowledge of the forest environment and its uses. Other aspects of traditional culture are also to be recorded, such as myths and oral history, ceremonies, and oratory by community leaders. These are to be used for the education of young people in traditional Kayapo culture. The tapes of ecological knowledge are also to be made available to Brazilian and international scholars and others interested in the use of renewable forest resources.

Although several Kayapo from different communities have become expert video camerapersons, none have yet acquired the capability to edit or dub. The Kayapo have no access to editing, copying, or climatically stable storage facilities. The latter are of prime importance, since climatic conditions and the uneven mechanical operation of generator-powered VCR decks in Kayapo villages lead to rapid deterioration of videotapes. To begin to meet these needs, I have obtained a grant from the Spencer Foundation to support the establishment of a Kayapo film archive at the video editing facility of the Ecumenical Center for Documentation and Information (CEDI) in São Paulo. Kayapo would have access to this facility for editing their own videotapes and could store their original rushes and masters in the air-conditioned archive located on the premises. Skilled personnel of CEDI and the Center for Indigenous Work (CTI) have indicated a willingness to teach editing skills to Kayapo video/filmmakers and work with them in a supportive capacity in the editing of their films. The projects of cultural self-documentation envisioned by Payakan and other Kayapo leaders will hopefully be able to be supported through this center and archive, to be established this summer.

From an anthropological point of view, the Kayapo acquisition and use of video technology is fraught with implications for Kayapo culture. In assessing these implications, it is necessary to take one's bearing from the historical context of the appropriation by the Kayapo of the whole range of technological skills most immediately involved in mediating their relationship to the dominant society. The Kayapo have already in effect reoriented themselves from the perspective of an isolated traditional society to that of

a dependent part of a social system which includes the dominant Western society as well. They have, at the same time, grasped that the situation of contact with the dominant society provides opportunities for considerable local autonomy and manipulation through the exploitation of their own political, economic, and technological resources.

At the same time, their remarkable success in seizing and exploiting these opportunities has been achieved through a reliance on their traditional social organization and cultural forms. While their struggle has been conceived as a defense of their traditional culture and social institutions, however, it has entailed the objectification of both in ways and to a degree unknown in "traditional" times (whether these are defined as preceding the earliest European contacts or the establishment of peaceful relations with Brazil). By "objectification," I mean, firstly, the conception of themselves as having a "culture" in our sense of the term, and secondly, the notion that this "culture" is something to be defended and consciously reproduced through deliberate choice and political action in a situation where alternatives (namely, assimilation to the national culture) are conceivable.

Representational media (photography, audio recording, but above all film and video) have played and are playing a key role in this process of cultural self-objectification. As the most concretely accessible aspects of the recording of their culture by outsiders, such as anthropologists and journalists, such media conveyed to the Kayapo more vividly and directly than any other form of communication that, in the eyes of these puzzling but potent outsiders, their stock of collective patterns of behavior constituted a total entity called a "culture" and, as such, had value in the eyes of that part of the alien society from whence the culture recorders emanated. The power of representation through these media thus became identified with the power of conferring value and meaning on themselves in the eyes of the outside world and, reflexively, in new ways, in their own eyes as well. The technology involved thereby assumed the character of a power to control the terms of this meaning and value-imbuing process. The acquisition of this technology, both in the form of hardware and operating skills, thus became a primary goal in the struggle for self-empowerment in the situation of inter-ethnic contact.

The significance of the acquisition of media capacity for the cultural politics of empowerment is manifest in the prominence the Kayapo give to their video camerapersons in their confrontations with the national society. The role of Kayapo camerapersons in situations such as the Altamira encounter is not only to make a Kayapo documentary record but to be



In the village of Gorotire, the Kayapo listen intently, then angrily, to a recorded message from neighboring chief Rop ni, who reprimands them for allowing gold prospectors on Kayapo land.

Courtesy Granada Television Ltd.



documented in the act of doing so by the non-Kayapo media. The point is thus made that the Kayapo are not dependent on the outside society for control over the representation of themselves and their actions but possess to a full and equal extent the means of control over the image, with all that it implies for the ability to define the meaning and value of acts and events in the arena of inter-ethnic interaction.

Video media thus become not merely a means of representing culture, actions, or events and the objectification of their meanings in social consciousness, but themselves the *ends* of social action and objectification in consciousness. The Kayapo have passed rapidly from the initial stage of conceiving video as a means of recording events to conceiving of video as the event to be recorded and, more broadly, conceiving events and actions as subjects for video.

The recent inter-tribal meeting in Altamira, which the Kayapo organized to protest a Brazilian project to build a hydroelectric dam scheme in the Xingu River valley, was planned from the outset as a demonstration of Kayapo culture and of political solidarity among the different Kayapo villages and non-Kayapo native peoples, that would lend itself to representation by informational media, above all film, video, and television. The documentary film made by Granada Television, *The Kayapo: Out of the Forest*, for which I served as anthropological consultant, was planned in close consultation with the Kayapo organizer of the Altamira meeting, Payakan, and formed an integral part of Payakan's plans for the demonstration. The idea for the film, in fact, originated in discussions between me and Payakan during his tour of North America in November 1988, when I served as his translator and host in Chicago. Payakan explained that the Kayapo wanted a complete documentation made of all phases of the organization of the meeting, including the preliminary preparations in the Kayapo villages, and that they saw this as an important part of their presentation of the event to the outside world. He accordingly undertook to secure our entry into two of the main Kayapo villages involved in the project and the cooperation of the villagers in enacting their ritual and other preparations before our cameras. He also invited us to accompany him and a delegation of 30 Kayapo leaders to inspect the huge hydroelectric dam at Tucuruí, which formed an important part of the initial phase of the organizing for Altamira. All of these subjects were duly represented in our film.

The staging of the Altamira meeting itself was comprehensively planned with a view to its appearance on film and video media. The daily sessions were in effect choreographed with gorgeous mass ritual performances which framed their beginnings, ends, and major high points. The encampment of the Kayapo participants was created as a model Kayapo village, complete with families, traditional shelters, and artifact production, all on display for the edification of the hundreds of photojournalists, TV and film camera crews, and video cameras. The Kayapo leaders saw Altamira as a major opportunity to represent themselves, their society, and their cause to the world and felt that the impact it would have on Brazilian and world public opinion, via the media, would be more important than the actual

dialogue with Brazilian representatives that transpired at the meeting itself. At the same time, they shrewdly realized that the production of a huge and gaudy confrontational event would draw large numbers of journalists and documentary-makers from the Brazilian and world media and that the presence of these witnesses and, through them, their mass audience ("the whole world is watching") would be their best guarantee that the Brazilian government would feel compelled to send its representatives to the meeting and to do its best to prevent violence against the indigenous participants. In the event, they were proved correct on all of these points. These, then, are further dimensions of the Kayapo use of media.

The reflexive relationship of the participant observer to the reality he or she records is of course common to all modes of anthropological fieldwork. In attempting to document the role of audio and video media in the cultural transformation and self-conscientization of the Kayapo through the use of audio and video media, however, the reflexive dynamic of this relationship is greatly intensified. One not only becomes part of the process one is trying to record, but directly affects it in numerous ways, some intended and some not.

What happened during the making of the first Granada *Disappearing World* film on the Kayapo is a case in point. I had planned the film as a comparative study of the reactions of two different Kayapo communities to the challenges presented by the encroachments of Brazilian society. I wanted to show that the Kayapo were successfully drawing on their common stock of social institutions and cultural values to resist and adapt to the national society and, at the same time, that they were in the process actively debating and revising the meaning of their own culture. The general point was that the "cultures" of simple societies like the Kayapo are not homogeneous, internally oriented, closed systems of "collective representations," but active processes of political struggle over the terms and meanings of collective accommodation to historical situations involving interaction with external conditions, including other societies. I was aware of the Kayapo use of audiocassette recorders and video cameras, and planned to include this, along with other forms of newly acquired technological expertise, in the film as instances of this general point.

When our crew was preparing to leave the first of the two villages to go to the second, the leader of the community asked us to record a message from him to the second community on one of our audiocassette recorders. The message criticized the second community for allowing too much Brazilian exploitation of tribal land and resources and generally for going too far in



Attempting to prevent the construction of the Altamira hydroelectric dam that would flood much their land, over 30 Kayapo chiefs met with the project's chief engineer. Several Kayapo video cameras were also on hand, making a record of each chief's statement. From Granada Television's *Disappearing World: Out of the Forest*.

Courtesy Granada Television Ltd.

the direction of acculturation to Brazilian ways. We duly called the tape to the attention of the second community, where it was played by that community's leading chief and to the assembled population. They reacted angrily to the criticisms of the first community's leader and several made speeches justifying their own approach to coexistence with the Brazilians, insisting that in their fashion they were remaining true to their culture. We filmed this dramatic and revealing encounter, and it became the central pivot of our film, linking the sections of the two communities as expressions of opposing positions in the historic debate taking place among the Kayapo over the meaning of their culture in the present crisis of inter-ethnic confrontation. As a prime example of the way the second community was attempting to use Brazilian technology to defend and preserve its Kayapo culture, we filmed their use of video to record their own ceremonies and encounters with the Brazilians, actually incorporating sections of videos they had shot in our film. In order to do this, however, we had to clean, restore, and recopy Kayapo videotapes which had been damaged by mildew and hard use. These in due course became available again to the community for showing on its own monitor. Meanwhile, our desire to film the Kayapo's use of video stimulated them to videotape our crew filming their video camerapersons videotaping certain ceremonies. In all of these ways, our activity of video- and audio-recording the Kayapo became a material part of their own use of video and audio media for their own political and cultural purposes. This material participation became, in an unplanned and spontaneous but therefore perhaps even more significant way, the organizing structure of our audio-visual representation of their cultural reality: the first *Disappearing World* Kayapo film. Our presentation of a video camera to the community was merely a further instance of this reflexive involvement in their use of audio-visual media.

When these reflexive dimensions of audio-visual documentation of a contemporary cultural reality, like that of the Kayapo, are considered together with the ways reviewed above that the Kayapo have begun to incorporate audio-visual media and the material activity of audio-visual recording (e.g., the presence of Kayapo video camerapersons and non-Kayapo film crews) into their own collective acts of political confrontation and cultural self-definition, it becomes apparent that the use of audio-visual media has taken on dimensions of meaning without close parallels in traditional anthropological methods of fieldwork. The quantitative shift certainly approaches, if it has not already reached, the point of qualitative transformation. For the anthropological filmmaker, the change has had the character of a shift from participant observation to observant participation.

This shift involves a change in the traditional terms of ethical responsibility in fieldwork. As a participant (willy-nilly) in processes of cultural self-conscientization and sociopolitical empowerment, the anthropological media user has some control over the terms of his or her participation, including the choice of deliberately planning his or her own documentary activity and its products so as to encourage, augment, or otherwise support the process he or she documents. The change wrought by the use of contemporary media technologies, however, affects not only the role of the anthropologists and documentary-makers, but the nature of the reality being documented. If the Kayapo are any indication, the processes of cultural and



ethnic self-conscientization that have been catalyzed by the new media and their use in worldwide networks of communication are becoming far more important as a component of "culture" (or, by the same token, "ethnicity") both in the sense of becoming more complex and rapidly developing and in that of becoming more central to basic social and political processes. The nature of "culture" itself is changing together with the techniques we employ to study and document it. This is a phenomenon that calls for more study and documentation by anthropologists than it has thus far received.

## ■ Update

*Editor's note: Since the preceding article was written, the author returned to several of the Kayapo communities where he had previously conducted research and filmed. What follows are excerpts from a report on recent achievements of the cooperative Kayapo Video Project, which resulted from the encounters and processes of self-documentation described in the earlier article. The full text of Turner's report on his activities and observations based on this work during the past summer appears in the Fall 1990 issue of the Commission on Visual Anthropology Review.*

Turner returned to Brazil with an agenda for the project: to deliver a new video camera to the community of Mentuktire, which had two trained camerapeople but lacked a functioning video camera; to arrange access for Kayapo video camerapeople to video editing facilities, with training assistance from experienced video editing technicians, so that they could learn to edit their own videos; to videotape in the field, acquiring fresh material for use in the first editing sessions where Kayapo video editors would receive training; to observe Kayapo editors at work, noting and analyzing the criteria they employed in their editing decisions; to establish a Kayapo Video Archive; and to involve two Kayapo communities, Gorotire and A'ukre (in addition to Mentuktire), in the project, getting them to generate video material to edit and add to the common Kayapo Video Archive.

It turned out that Kinhiabieti of Mentuktire had already videotaped two ceremonies before the community's video camera broke and was eager to edit this material. With the generous and extensive help of Vincent Carelli and other personnel at the Centro de Trabalho Indigenista (CTI) of São Paulo, I was able to arrange access for the Kayapo to the video editing facilities of the Centro. Carelli himself undertook to teach Kinhiabieti to edit, and supervised his use of the editing equipment in making finished videos of the two ceremonies. The results were the first two Kayapo-edited videos, a 17-minute tape of the women's naming ceremony or Menire Mebiok, and a 42-minute tape of the corresponding men's naming ceremony, the Memu Mebiok.

With Carelli's cooperation, I was also able to establish the embryonic Kayapo Video Archive at the CTI, starting with the original edited tapes of





The beautiful-naming ceremony, an important ritual imparting status on the name-receiver, was videotaped and edited by Kinhiabieti in Mentuktire, Parque Nacional do Xingu. The three-month-long male naming ceremony is called the Memu Mebiok.

Courtesy Kayapo/Turner

the two ceremonies and other rushes brought by Kinhiabieti from Mentuktire. The CTI is prepared to serve as the venue for all Kayapo video editing operations in the near future and to store video rushes and original finished videos from all Kayapo communities there. Videomakers from all Kayapo communities will have access to all these materials, and all Kayapo communities will be able to make copies of the finished videos for use in their own villages. It is also envisioned that the CTI Kayapo archive will serve as a distribution point for circulation to non-Kayapo interested in viewing these tapes.

After editing the videos of the two ceremonies with Kinhiabieti at CTI, I returned with him to his home village of Mentuktire. There I presented the new video camera and supply of videotapes I had brought, explained my ideas for the video project to the people, and solicited their ideas about subjects to be filmed and about maintaining community input and control of the project.

From Mentuktire I flew by air taxi to the Brazilian town of Redencao, located near the Kayapo village of Gorotire. There I found all the chiefs and younger leaders of Gorotire gathered for a meeting at a hostel the Gorotire maintain on the outskirts of town. I discussed the video project with them, and they concurred enthusiastically with its program and aims. Also in Redencao was Mokuka, the leader and video cameraman from A'ukre, with whom I had planned to coordinate that community's participation in the project. Mokuka was extremely enthusiastic about participating, personally learning to edit, and doing videotaping in his own community. I arranged to bring him to São Paulo to learn editing at CTI when I return in January, at which time I also hope to be able to bring a video camera for his community.

I urged one of the Gorotire leaders to come back to São Paulo with me so that I could introduce him to the CTI and its editing facilities, and establish a direct connection between the Gorotire and the CTI. One of them, Tapiet, accepted my invitation, but took Carelli and me offguard when he coolly directed us, upon his arrival, to videotape his visit so that he could show the people back in the village everything he was seeing. We complied, reflecting on how well the Kayapo have mastered the *civilizado* maxim that what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.

In the course of our discussions, Tapiet formed the plan of making a video documentary of the various Brazilian threats to their environment (from miners, loggers, ranchers, and small-farm squatters) and of the projects for alternative economic development the Gorotire have established on the

border of their reserve. Five border guard posts have been constructed, at each of which agricultural or gathering projects have been started to provide sources of cash income for the community. Tapiet is presently engaged in taping material for this video, together with another young Gorotire leader, Kuben'i. Tapiet and Kuben'i want to use their video to support appeals for aid

to international funding agencies for the Gorotire projects. At the same time, they are videotaping Gorotire rituals and have completed shooting on two men's naming ceremonies, the Takak and Memu Mebiok.

At the meeting of Gorotire leaders that was in progress when I arrived in Redencao, I found that the main topic of discussion was the crisis that had just been precipitated by a dispute between two senior Kayapo chiefs, Pombo of Kikretum and Rop ni of Mentuktire, over the right to represent the Kayapo nation as a whole to the Brazilian and foreign public and media. This crisis was to have important repercussions on the video project. Stung by criticism from Rop ni, perhaps the best known and most influential Kayapo leader, FUNAI, the government Indian Service, had induced Pombo to stage a farcical media event in which he "deposed" Rop ni from the (fictitious) position of supreme Kayapo leader and proclaimed himself his successor in that role. A communique to this effect was circulated, purportedly with the assent of a number of Kayapo chiefs who had been assembled at Pombo's village for the purpose, which began with a declaration of unqualified devotion and support for FUNAI. I found that most Kayapo, leaders and rank and file alike, were in fact supporting Rop ni, and held Pombo's grandiose pretensions in contempt.

Aware that I was going on to Brasilia, where Rop ni had gone to confront the crisis, the Gorotire chiefs asked me to bear a message to Rop ni conveying their support. This I duly did, at the same time taking the opportunity to present the video project to Rop ni, who had not been at Mentuktire when I had gone there with Kinhiabieti and whose support would be crucial to the success of the project in that community. Rop ni gave the project his full support. He is a culturally conservative leader, concerned with the preservation of Kayapo traditional knowledge, social institutions, and way of life. He saw the video project as an aid in this effort, and also emphasized that videos showing the Kayapo following their traditional ways would be politically effective in "shaming" Brazilian and international financial agencies attempting to institute "development" schemes that would disrupt Kayapo communities and their environment.

In late October, several months after my return from Brazil, I received an urgent telephone call from Mokuka in São Paulo; he had come under the mistaken impression that I was still there. It developed that Mokuka and Rop ni had jointly called a plenary meeting of the leaders of all Kayapo communities at A'ukre for mid-November, which was to serve both to reassert support for Rop ni's leadership in repudiation of Pombo's challenge and to ratify Mokuka's leadership of the large majority of the A'ukre community,



**The corresponding female naming ceremony is known as the Menire Mebiok.**

Courtesy Kayapo/Turner



which he had decided to move to a new site as the result of a smoldering dispute with another A'ukre leader, Payakan. The A'ukre meeting of chiefs, ostensibly called to affirm Kayapo unity and Rop ni's leadership in the aftermath of Pombo's failed challenge, would also conveniently provide a capital setting for Mokuka to obtain the collective support of the assembled Kayapo leaders for his precipitation of the schism of A'ukre itself.

Mokuka was very eager to make a video record of this meeting, which (he clearly hoped) would serve as a legitimating charter for his authority as leader of the new community he hopes to found following the meeting. This, it turned out, was the reason why he wanted so urgently to get in touch with me. Could I arrange somehow to get him a video camera *before* I came in January, so that the great council at A'ukre could be documented? As it turned out, I was able to obtain one for him, and he will thus be able to make a video record of this historic and politically important Kayapo gathering.

He and I plan to review and edit the tapes of the A'ukre meeting at CTI in January. This episode makes clear the extent to which the use of video has already become integrated into Kayapo political thought, action, and maneuver, not only in confrontations with Brazilians, but in their own internal political processes and crises. It also brings out forcefully how a project that hopes to document the formation of social and cultural consciousness, recognizing that it must at the same time become a catalytic factor in the process it hopes to record, must expect to become enmeshed in the political aspects of that process.

In the same telephone call in which I talked with Mokuka, I was also able to speak with Kinhiabieti, who had accompanied Mokuka to São Paulo from his home community of Mentuktire, where Mokuka had been planning the forthcoming A'ukre meeting with chief Rop ni. Kinhiabieti had shown Carelli and me two hours of rushes of a long, detailed, and beautifully shot video of the anteater mask ceremony at CTI in July. He had intended to complete the videotaping of the ceremony in Mentuktire in late August, for editing at CTI when I returned in January. Unfortunately, however, his house had burned down, with his tapes of the earlier part of the ceremony, before the end of the rite was held. The video camera and most of the blank tapes were saved, and he is presently working on another ceremony and a series of political statements by chiefs about the political conflict between Rop ni and Pombo and other current Kayapo political issues. He will edit this material at CTI in January.

He or his colleague Waiwai also plan to go to the site of the recent invasion of the Waura tribal area of the Xingu National Park by a group of armed ranchers. The ranchers burnt a Waura village to the ground and are threatening to establish a ranch in its place. The Mentuktire have offered to send a group of armed men to aid in the defense of the Waura and plan to send a video cameraman along to record the conflict and the deeds of their expeditionary force if they actually go. Their plan for the expedition thus

provides yet another example of the way the Kayapo have integrated video into their political confrontations with the national society.

One of my main anthropological reasons for launching the video project was to study the Kayapo approach to editing their own video material. Kinhiabieti's editing of his two lots of video rushes on the men's and women's naming ceremonies from Mentuktire gave me my first opportunity to observe a Kayapo editor in action. I had surmised that the Kayapo might be guided in editing videos of their own culture by the same cultural schemas that guided the performance of the cultural activities in question. Kinhiabieti's ceremonial material provided an opportunity to test this hypothesis.

Kinhiabieti's editing of the two ceremonial videos fully bore out my expectations. The ceremonies in question were long and complex, involving some two months of continual ritual activity. This activity is organized in repetitive sequences of singing and dancing, in which the same dances, accompanied by the same songs, are performed in the same order but in a series of different places, beginning at a secluded site in the forest far from the village and then moving through several intervening sites to end with the climactic celebrations in the central village plaza. In the earlier performances, only a few decorations made from palm leaves are worn, but in the final dances in the village plaza, the full panoply of feather capes, head-dresses, and other special ornaments are worn. In editing his tapes of these sequences, Kinhiabieti meticulously included bits of every dance performed at every site that he had on tape, in the same order in which they occurred. Repetition was not only not avoided but emphasized. The aim was to make a full and faithful representation of the entire ritual performance, and to show that the ceremony had been fully and properly performed.

The schema of the ceremonial performance, in other words, was applied reflexively as the schema guiding the editing of its video representation. Nonrepetitive elements, for example special rites, activities, or ornaments performed or worn at specific points in the ritual by persons who receive the right to do so from a relative, were also scrupulously shown. No significant particularity, in Kayapo terms, was omitted. There was, in sum, no editorial selection or emphasis of some segments or aspects of the scripted order of the ceremony at the expense of others. One result of this was that, following the editing cut-by-cut against my shot record of the rushes, I learned a great deal about the naming ceremonies that I had not known before, although I had seen them both performed. To judge by these videos, the Kayapo are excellent and assiduous ethnographers of themselves, which is exactly what



Profits from the gold mine are used to buy equipment that will help preserve Kayapo culture and land. This includes an airplane, which they use to scout for illegal ranchers, timber cutters, and squatters, and video cameras, used to document Kayapo culture, meetings, and events.

Courtesy Granada Television Ltd.

The Kayapo community organizer Payakan contacts by radio the Indian villages that would be affected by the Altamira dam and begins planning a massive protest. It's here that the Kayapo effectively use the news media to bring their message to the world and turn the tide against the dam.

Courtesy Granada Television Ltd.



Kayapo editors will resort to similar reflexive representational strategies remains to be seen. The construction of video representations of cultural and political subjects has become for the Kayapo an important channel for formulating new or altered ideological schemas for interpreting and acting upon them.

## ■ End notes

The writing of this article has been made possible in part by generous support from the Spencer Foundation and the Center for Latin American Studies at Cornell University. I have benefited greatly from discussions of the ideas presented in the paper with Faye Ginsburg, Paul Henley, Fred Myers, and critical audiences at showings and discussions of my Kayapo films at the Margaret Mead Festival (1988 and 1989), the Festival of Native American Film (1989), the University of Chicago (1988 and 1989), New York University (1988 and 1989), and Amazon Week, New York, 1990.

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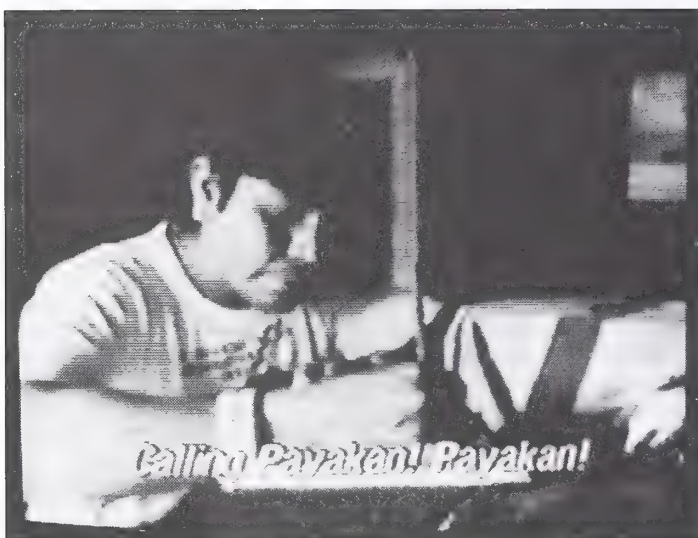
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they set out to be in their approach to video self-documentation.

These first Kayapo-edited videos were made for Kayapo viewers: there is no attempt at voiceover, narration, or commentary, let alone translation, subtitles, credits, or written title or logo. Some of the videos to be edited in January, however, such as the Gorotire video on environmental problems and community development projects, will be made primarily for the purpose of presenting Kayapo reality to non-Kayapo audiences, and will require most of these standard accessories of conventional documentary film and video. It is envisioned that at least some of the videos made by the Kayapo for internal use in their own cultural self-documentation will be dubbed with explanatory narrative and subtitled to allow them to be circulated for viewing by non-Kayapo audiences. The arrangements for distribution remain to be worked out with the Kayapo. Presumably, it will be coordinated through the Kayapo Video Archive. Meanwhile, interest in the Kayapo videos seems already to be building in the international documentary video and film community. By special arrangement, the two videos of the naming ceremonies were shown at the Festival of New Cinema in Montreal in October, which devoted its program this year to film and video of and by indigenous peoples. Copies have also been acquired by the Visual Media Department of the Museum of the American Indian of New York.

The diversity of subjects represented by the videos to be edited in January should bring out an interesting variety of conceptual strategies and cultural assumptions on the part of their Kayapo editors. Internal Kayapo political factionalism, community economic projects, and political and environmental conflicts with the national society will not be able to be dealt with by the same cultural schemas as Kayapo ceremonies; the extent to which



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# WHAT THE MANUAL DIDN'T TELL YOU

## Video Painting—Graphics II

RICK FEIST AND MECHTILD SCHMIDT

*This article is eighth in a series written by staff members of the Standby Program, a nonprofit video access and education program dedicated to providing artists and independent producers with sophisticated video services they can afford. Standby's technicians are artists themselves and therefore offer vital understanding and sympathetic collaboration. Since 1983, works made possible by Standby have been broadcast on the Public Broadcasting Service, as well as European and Japanese television, and have been exhibited in museums and galleries worldwide. The information presented here and in future articles should help you make appropriate technical decisions to suit your aesthetic and budgetary needs.*

*The previous chapters of this editing guide*

*reviewed video recording formats, time code, off-line editing, switchers, digital video effects, and titling methods.*

The digital paint box suggests sinister image manipulation, undermining the faith of those who believe in the camera's objectivity. The buildings of the New York skyline can be rearranged seamlessly, the red luxury car driving down the road may well be blue, or the CEO's wart can be removed without resorting to surgery. To the realist, such legerdemain is only slightly less disturbing than genetic engineering.

Behind the myths, however, is a basic technology that has established itself not only in film and television but in architecture, photography, and mechanical engineering—to name a few applications. The suspicion of artifice overshadows the creative potentials introduced by this technology. When considering the ethics of image manipula-

tion via the paint box, we might well ask if we expect painting—the traditional kind—to produce an objective representation of the world.

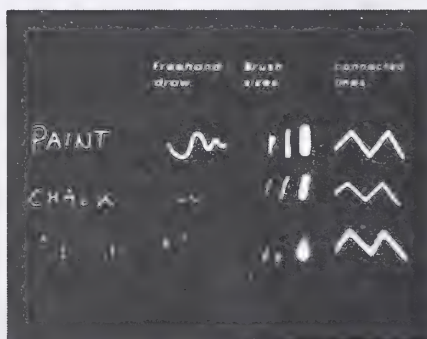
### ✧ PAINT BOX ✧

Paint Box is a trade name for the machine first manufactured in the early 1980s by the Quantel Corporation. Though the Paint Box is still the industry standard, dozens of painting systems have appeared since. Digital F/X or Symbolics are the devices of choice for some broadcast studios. Certain character generators (Chyron, Vidifont, etc.) have optional paint programs, although their capabilities are rudimentary.

Nonbroadcast painting programs can be found in all major microcomputer systems: e.g., Macpaint (Macintosh), Deluxe Paint (Amiga), PC Paint (PC). More sophisticated microcomputer systems, such as Lumena or Tips, require the installation of a Targa or Vista board which serves as the video



1



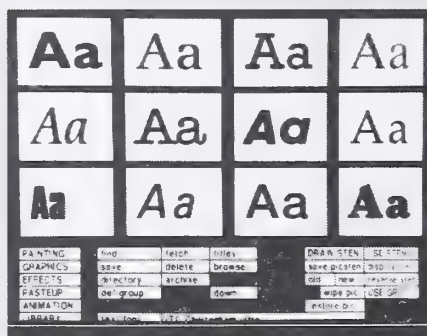
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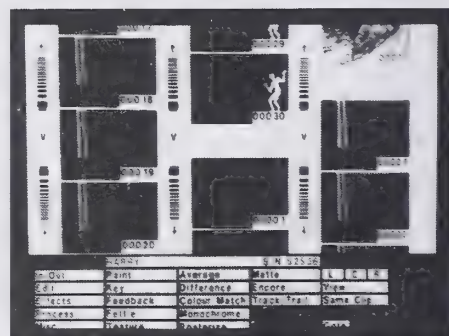
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All photos courtesy Rick Feist and Mechtild Schmidt



interface. Beware of outlandish claims made by the manufacturers of small systems. The video output may not be up to standard.

Paint systems usually emulate traditional painting media. The operator uses a stylus (an electronic pen) and a tablet (a block with a flat surface sensitive to the stylus). Cheaper systems use a mouse. The stylus is the brush. Drawing with the stylus produces a corresponding drawing on the screen. The stylus used for the Paint Box tablet is pressure sensitive. The harder one pushes down, the thicker the application.

A stroke to any edge of the tablet overlays the image with a menu system that mimics a painter's palette (figure 1). The palette allows selection from an array of colors (the painter's pots). A color may be applied directly or mixed with others to create new colors. A color for the brush may even be selected from the image onscreen, and placed onto the palette.

Associated with the palette is a menu of options to determine the characteristics of the brush (figure 2). Brushes can be selected in various sizes, often as small as a single pixel. Most systems allow enlargements of two and four times the size of the image to permit fine work on details. Brushes imitate oil paint, watercolor, airbrush, crayon, and chalk, though the appearance onscreen is often more associative than actual. Some systems offer a variety of brush shapes (circular, square, diamond shape, etc.). Most systems pro-

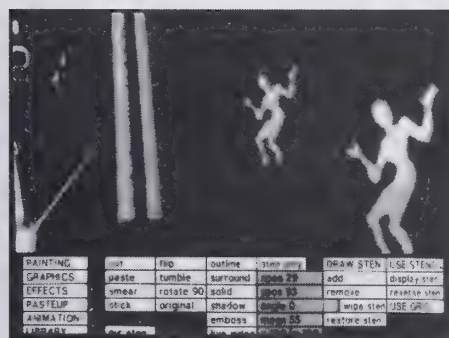
vide point to point line connection. Rather than relying on the steadiness of the human hand, straight lines are created by defining two endpoints.

Another menu offers stencil capabilities (figure 3). A stencil may be drawn by hand or produced using geometric shapes (circle, square, etc.). Tracing the outline of an object produces a stencil. The object can then be moved or copied as a paste-up, even superimposed on another image (Figure 4). A stencil actually utilizes a black and white matte (hi-con) to key the paste-up over the background. The key edges of the matte can be softened to produce a smoother superimposition.

The Paint Box was designed for artists, not computer programmers. The most mathematical function is grid settings along the X and Y axes used to position paste-ups or align elements. The Paint Box also has a limited titling capacity, with a small number of built-in fonts that can be enlarged, reduced, or condensed. Though the type is of higher resolution than most character generators, special effects like credit rolls or crawls are not possible [see "In Focus," *The Independent*, October 1990, on titling systems].

#### ❖ COMPUTER PAINTING ❖

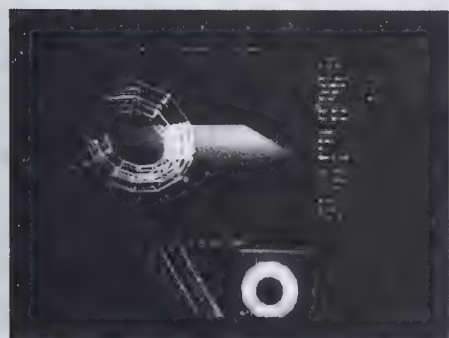
A computer painting system holds a single image in a frame buffer. The frame buffer actually contains a series of numerical values that represent the amount of red, green, and blue (RGB) for each



4



5



9

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pixel, or point, of the image. By means of a decoder, a standard (analog) video signal can be created from these points. A video signal can also be fed into the frame buffer of a paint system: an encoder samples the signal to derive the numerical RGB values with which the buffer operates [see "In Focus," *The Independent*, May 1990, on digital video].

The quality of a paint system depends on several factors. The resolution (sharpness of line) depends on the number of pixels per line utilized by the paint system. The number of colors a system is capable of reproducing will determine how natural the image appears. Inexpensive systems are only capable of 4,096 colors (16 bit processors) or less, while professional (32 bit systems) yield over 16 million different colors.

The sophistication of the painting software to correct artifacts is also significant. Curves and diagonal lines may look jagged, defined in a stair-step fashion. In technical jargon, this is known as aliasing. A professional system will blend the contrasting color and brightness levels on either side of the line to create a more uniform appearance (figure 5).

The time it takes for a computer graphics system to load a single frame into the frame buffer depends on the complexity of the image and the speed at which the CPU (central processing unit) operates. The Paint Box is a "real-time" (30fps) system, capturing a frame of moving video faster than one-thirtieth of a second (the duration of one video frame). The time that microcomputer systems require to load an image is measured in seconds, or even in minutes.

Images are stored in a library (figures 6 & 7), which is simply a directory of files. Each image requires its own file and is accessed by name. A paint system requires a lot of memory, both internal RAM and long term storage (floppy disk, hard disk, etc.). One megabyte (1 million bytes) is the storage space allotted for an image in the Paint Box. Internal to the Paint Box is a hard disk, which will store about 330 images.

Images copied to analog videotape ("lay-off") deteriorate markedly. Quality loss is particularly evident on fine lines. When reloaded into a paint system, such images may require hours of touching up to restore sharpness. If even one-inch tape is inadequate, you can imagine the crud that results from the U-matic (3/4") format. Use 8mm and VHS at your own risk.

Broadcast quality paint systems store imagery as digital RGB values onto cartridges, hard disks (Winchester drives), or D1 digital videotapes. Thus stored, the digital information can be reloaded without quality loss. When binary 1s and 0s are copied as a computer file, they are not subject to noise and the various amplifier and time base distortions that affect analog recordings.

### ❖ MEETING HARRY ❖

The Harry is a companion piece for the Paint Box. It is a digital disk system that can store up to 75

seconds of NTSC video images (2,250 frames). Harry also acts as an editor. Three columns of images imitate film strips, allowing for mixing, matching, cutting, and keying of "clips," or sequences of images (figure 8). When attached, Harry can be accessed directly through the Paint Box menus, to "buy" and "sell" (transfer) imagery between the two machines.

Harry also has a number of automated functions that would require hours of extra time with a Paint Box alone. Before Harry, animations were made by the slow process of recording frame by frame on videotape. Harry works in "real time," except when performing the most complex image mixes. Harry can easily produce slow or fast motion by interpolating or removing frames. Harry will do dissolves and keys between two clips to create a new, combined clip.

When images are mixed digitally, copies do not lose quality over generations. The Paint Box and Harry interface with the so-called 4:2:2 component digital format. The numbers refer to the ratio of the frequency of the digital samples to the 3.58mhz subcarrier frequency. The luminance (black and white values) is sampled at 13.5 million times per second. The I and Q color difference signals are sampled 6.75 million times per second. Digital video effects devices that utilize this format can be used directly with the Paint Box/Harry. The Encore and more capable Kaleidoscope are commonly available in Harry suites.

The Harry does luminance keys and can utilize a matte signal [see "In Focus," *The Independent*, March 1990, on keying]. A good chroma key is possible, but only with RGB signals that have never been encoded (i.e., recorded on a standard VTR in NTSC). Video that cannot be cleanly separated by chroma or luminance keys must be painstakingly matted with the Paint Box. Rotoscoping is a process by which an individual item is separated from a moving scene (a car, a person, and so on) to create a travelling matte. An outline stencil of the shape must be drawn for each single frame of the scene. At an average of five minutes per frame, a two-second scene of video will require five hours of rotoscoping.

As with other first generation digital machines (Abekas A62), Harry can add only one layer of video at a time. The building of layers must begin with the background. Subsequent layers are added sequentially on top of one another. This can be a constraint if you haven't planned your keying priorities—which layers are to be laid on top of others. Changing an earlier layer may mean starting from scratch. Even if each pass is saved on digital tape (a time-consuming process, in itself), all the work done since the layer to be changed must be redone.

The Harry uses time code to determine where to begin input (loading imagery in) or output (playing imagery out). Moving video may be input from standard NTSC signals (VTRs or color cameras), from RGB or component signals, or from the 4:2:2 digital format, which works best.



Harry clips are likewise best saved on the D1 digital video format (D1 uses the 4:2:2 format). Quantel offers a clip management option that automatically outputs sequences from Harry to tape and loads them back into Harry when resuming work. Another option is HarryTracks, which provides stereo digital audio capabilities. A Harry not so equipped is only capable of recording a low fidelity scratch track.

#### ❖ THE THIRD DIMENSION ❖

The Paint Box is considered a 2D system. When a Paint Box image is rotated, the objects have no volume but appear as flat as a drawing on paper. 3D animations are programmed on machines with names like Vertigo, Wavefront, Alias, Symbolics, or Cubicomp. Most are Unix-based systems. They are generally operated in the manner of CAD/CAM systems, beginning with wireframe objects created with points on an XYZ coordinate system (figure 9). For orientation, the object is viewed from different angles: front, back, above, below, etc. Some machines allow the object to be seen from as many as four angles simultaneously.

Producing a 3D animation is like working in an artificial studio, allowing one to set up objects, cameras, and lights. First the contours, volume, and surface characteristics of each object are stipulated. Then these are modified in position, shape, color, camera angle, etc. along a series of keyframes to create an animation. At this stage, the animation can only be seen as a wireframe or as schematic objects. Rendering is the process by which the computer calculates and saves the full resolution frame; even powerful computers may require up to 30 minutes to render a complex frame. Contrary to the common association that video is immediate, 3D animations are often rendered overnight and seen for the first time in the morning.

3D features once available only on large systems are now found in systems for PC and Mac computers. Still, image quality and speed are measured in dollars. From multimedia desktop systems to broadcast postproduction, real time digital storage and playback are superseding traditional analog storage methods. At the low end, data compression techniques allow real time moving video on microcomputers, albeit with low resolution. At the other end, an HDTV (high definition television) version of the Paint Box now used by print media is capable of 8000 lines of resolution (compared to NTSC video's 525). Photographs are not only retouched; composite photographs are made from several original photographs. Even a trained eye may fail to notice. How real is such an image?

*Rick Feist and Mechtild Schmidt work for the Standby Program.*

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## NOW A WORD ABOUT OUR SPONSOR

### A Guide To Fiscal Sponsorship Agreements

ROBERT L. SEIGEL

Film- and videomakers know that the term independent is a misnomer, since they are frequently dependent on many people—investors (usually friends, relatives, or acquaintances), crew and cast from film school or other productions who also are seeking to get their feet in the door, as well as others who can provide moral and/or financial support. One important component in this respect are the nonprofit service organizations that provide financial and creative support to independent artists, frequently at the development or “seed money” stage—often the most difficult funds to acquire for a project. Such organizations are referred to as sponsors, umbrella organizations, conduits, or fiscal agents.

Although these terms are used interchangeably, film/videomakers would be wise to have any sponsoring group define exactly what they are and what services they offer. Artists applying for certain grants from government agencies will require an alliance with a nonprofit organization, since such funds are not available to individual artists but to those who work under the auspices of

a sponsor serving as an intermediary between the financial source and the producer.

One of the primary benefits for a film/videomaker in entering into an agreement with a not-for-profit sponsor is that any private contribution or donation made to the artist through the sponsor is tax deductible for the funder, since the sponsor is a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Besides grant-making organizations, individual private donors can take advantage of a 501(c)(3) deduction for tax purposes since nonprofit organizations of this type are regarded as “charitable” or “public supported” organizations—a true selling point for film/videomakers in the seemingly perpetual quest for project money.

In addition to the tax advantages and the necessity of a film/videomaker having a sponsor before applying for public funds, such a relationship between the parties indicates to prospective funders that a third party has reviewed the project and found merit in it. Therefore, it is important when approaching a prospective sponsor to have a business plan that outlines the project, its objectives, the possible methods for funding it, and who is responsible and involved in its development, production, distribution, and exhibition.

The film/videomaker should clearly state the nature of the project (i.e., short, feature; fiction or documentary; film or videotape) so that both parties—producer and sponsor—can determine whether the project fits within the parameters of the sponsor’s mandate and that it is not a project primarily intended as a profit-making venture. Such guidelines vary from one group to the next. Moreover, some sponsors accept only certain types of projects, and it will benefit the film/videomaker to know of these restrictions (e.g., a project must originate from a certain state, have a producer from a given area, or address particular issues and interests). Sponsors will look favorably upon a business plan that addresses these considerations, since their credibility is dependent upon the projects they sponsor. Additionally, fiscal agents must exercise caution selecting projects, since tax authorities and other governmental bodies regard any income or losses derived from a project as the sponsor’s responsibility, for tax purposes.

Sponsors can also provide services other than the use of their 501(c)(3) status, including bulk mailing privileges and a state tax exemption. One caveat: a state sales tax exemption is not a license to have a personal life that is tax free. Some film/videomakers or their crews have used this benefit

#### NONPROFIT SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS IN NEW YORK

organization	# of proj. sponsored in 1990 (approx.)	agencies applied to	# of proj. funded in 1990 (approx.)	percent of grants used for sponsor's administrative costs	services provided by sponsor	types of projects sponsored	conditions imposed on projects
Apparatus Productions	10	NYSCA, NEA, Paul Robeson Fund	5	6%	advice at each stage of production	experimental narrative	none
Collective for Living Cinema	10-15	NYSCA	6	5%	administer grant, production advice	projects challenging formal constructions/uses of film and video	none
Film News Now Foundation	30	NYSCA, NYCH, NEH, Paul Robeson Fund, CPB, AFI	15	5%	consultations from pre- to postproduction, budget preparation, referrals, crews	Third World issues, women's media, minorities	none
Icarus	7-8	NYSCA	unconfirmed	5%	monthly statements, advice on contracts, studio services	environmental, education	none
Media Network	40-50	NYSCA, FIVF, Paul Robeson Fund, J. Robert MacArthur Foundation, NYCH	unconfirmed	5-7%	bookkeeping, fundraising	social change	none
Millennium Film Workshop	5-7	NYSCA	1-2	3-5%	equipment access, office space, editing facilities, screenings opportunities, advice	all	none
New York Foundation for the Arts	300	NYSCA, NEA, NEH	80	7% for first \$150,000, 3% for \$400,000, \$1-million negotiable	information on key deadlines, review proposals, scripts, sample reels, advice on funding/distribution/promotion, support all their projects at the Independent Feature Market	all	none
Women Make Movies	30-35	NYSCA, NEA, NEH	10-15	5%	proposal writing, fundraising, interns, resources, skills bank, files, screening facilities	women, social issues	producer must be female

\* This chart represents a survey of New York City organizations that act as fiscal sponsors. It is not intended to be a comprehensive guide.



to avoid paying sales tax on daily meals and even their laundry. Such abuses can lead to the deterioration of an artist's relationship with a sponsor and can place the sponsor under scrutiny by the state and federal tax authorities.

Similarly, sponsors can provide film/video-makers with such services as the use of a computer, office equipment, and space. A few sponsors offer insurance coverage in connection with their productions, but most do not, although they may assist the artists in obtaining coverage through their contacts. Sponsees may also be permitted to use a sponsor's account in order to obtain such goods and services as lab work and equipment. However, many vendors will not permit a producer to open an account in his or her own name or in the sponsor's name—even if the latter already has an account—without the sponsor's express consent, often given in writing. Sometimes use of an organization's account will be allowed on the condition that the sponsee has a certain amount of funds in her or his own account.

All of the above stated services should be listed in detail in any agreement between the parties. As compensation for these services and to defray expenses, sponsors generally deduct an administrative fee of approximately five to 10 percent from any grant or contribution channeled through the organization prior to the allocation of such funds to the producer. Although many fiscal agents request an administrative fee of approximately five percent from government grants and seven percent from all other funds allocated to the sponsored project, others will deduct slightly more than five percent as an administrative fee from all monies derived during the period of the sponsorship agreement. However, such a fee can be rolled back to five percent for funds received in excess of a certain figure (e.g., over \$100,000). Sponsors will often agree to deduct a lower administrative fee from government grants which stipulate a maximum administrative fee. However, a film/videomaker should discuss whether the sponsor will accept a lower administrative fee when government grants are involved.

A sponsor will request periodic and final status reports concerning the development and the fiscal status of the producer's project—a review of a project's records and receipts. Any agreement between the parties should detail the requirements of such reports as well as how often such reports should be submitted and/or the reporting requirements for any particular funding sources.

One particular point that should be addressed by the parties and acknowledged in any agreement concerns interest from funds deposited in an account designated for the project. Sponsors may want the interest from such funds to defray the costs of service charges imposed by a bank. The sponsorship agreement should also clearly indicate how the funds are to be collected and dispersed by the sponsor (e.g., funds placed in a clearly identified account or listed in the sponsor's books, whether each project has a separate account or the funds for several are placed in a

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given account, and so on). A schedule reflecting the timing and manner of the collection and the dispersal of funds to the producer should also be spelled out. And the agreement should designate the time period in which funds should be remitted to a project after an administrative fee is deducted by the sponsor (e.g., within 10 days of clearance of such funds in the sponsor's bank account).

To avoid the payment of unemployment benefits, worker's compensation, and disability payments for the crew and cast of a sponsored project, the fiscal agent usually insists that the film/videomaker agree to assume such obligations. In some sponsorship agreements there is a provision in which the sponsor requires the producer to secure standard film production liability insurance of a certain amount (e.g., \$1,000,000) to cover any property or equipment damage, bodily injuries, or death incurred during the production as well as to absolve or indemnify the sponsor from any liability.

On the creative side, most sponsors agree that all rights to a film/video project as well as its material ownership (i.e., video master or film negative) should be retained by the producer, however, prudence dictates that this provision be included in the sponsorship agreement. Moreover, most such agreements acknowledge that the sponsoree shall have control over a project's production, marketing, distribution, promotion, and exhibition, although several organizations

offer consulting services in such business and marketing areas as part of their services.

A crucial point that a film/videomaker should know is that a sponsor is generally not an investor or a broker who will locate potential funding sources, although many sponsors may provide advice and possible contacts for such funders. Almost all sponsorship agreements have a provision in which sponsors and/or donors receive on-screen credit for services rendered, as well as credit in all promotional and advertising materials. Although such a provision is standard, the appropriate credit should be addressed by the parties before entering into agreement and stated explicitly in such a document.

For the purpose of protection against any person or organization that may claim to be a qualified, nonprofit corporation a producer should request a copy of the organization's Form 990 (Return of Organization Exemption from Income Tax, which indicates that the sponsor is a federally recognized, tax exempt organization) and Form 872-C (Consent Fixing Period of Limitation upon Assessment of Tax under Section 4940 of the Internal Revenue Code). Since the execution of such forms is contingent upon an organization receiving a letter of determination from the Internal Revenue Service (acknowledging that the sponsor's plan and potential activities have been examined by the Internal Revenue Service, which has determined that the sponsor is eligible for

federal tax-exemption), a potential sponsoree may also request a copy of such a letter.

Some final points: Be sure to clarify the rights and obligations of both parties in the agreement. Some sponsors offer a range of services which can include fiscal and/or administrative services, fiscal and creative consultation, and, sometimes, coproduction arrangements. Film/videomakers should be certain what a sponsor seeks, not only in terms of administrative fees but also whether they will assert the right to place the completed project in their archive or exhibit the project in a festival or series of screenings arranged by the sponsor. These provisions might either help or hinder the economic incentives for a distributor to acquire the rights to a project.

Finally, the producer must retain all receipts for goods and services acquired in connection with the project. Accurate record-keeping is a cornerstone to any sponsor-sponsoree relationship, since prudent practices establish the fiscal credibility of a film/videomaker for this and future projects. Should any issue arise among the parties, which include funders as well as the producer and fiscal agents, thorough records are especially important.

*Robert L. Seigel is an attorney who is currently in private practice in New York City in the areas of intellectual property and entertainment law.*

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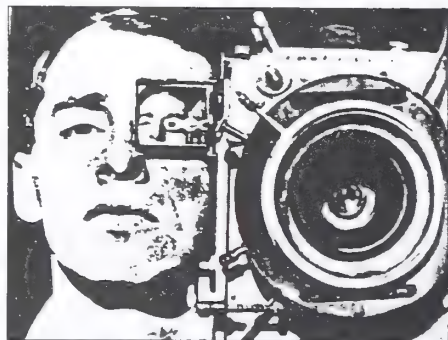
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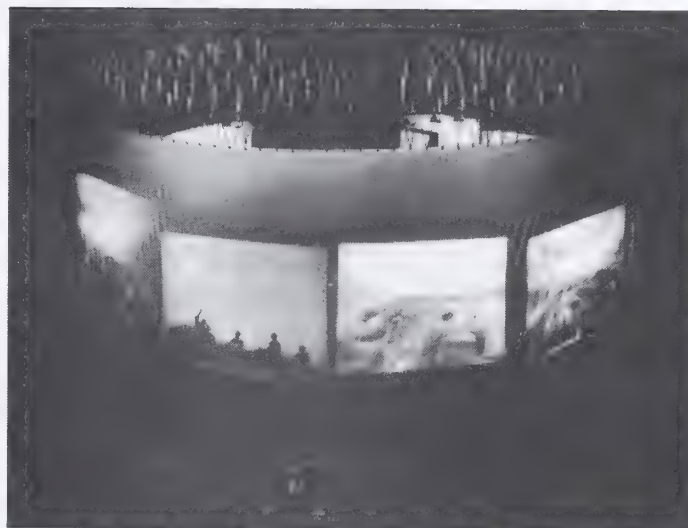
Nebraska videomaker Konrad Pregowski has completed **A Time in the Life of Israel Szapiro, #129564**, the story of a Nazi death camp survivor. In the half-hour documentary, Szapiro, aka Irving Shapiro, describes life in the small Jewish town of Miedzyrzec, Poland, which was annihilated by Nazi occupiers. Szapiro's parents, Mala and Hershel Szapiro, were taken to the Treblinka death camp where they were killed. Shapiro and his younger brother, Alexander, ended up in another extermination camp, Majdanek, where Alexander eventually disappeared but Israel survived. *A Time in the Life* was funded in part by the Nebraska Committee for the Humanities and has been picked up for broadcast by the state's educational TV network. *A Time in the Life of Israel Szapiro, #129564*: Konrad Pregowski, Professional Video Services, 3108 18th Ave., Scottsbluff, NE 69361; (308) 635-3606.

Boston-based filmmaker Lisa Faircloth is now in postproduction with **En Route**, the tragic story of Dennis Fagan. At 26, Fagan is an optimist with a heart of gold and many one-liners. He is blessed—or perhaps cursed—with dreams that tend to become premonitions. Faircloth's 80-minute first feature follows protagonist Fagan on a fated trip through Canada en route to a cannery job in Alaska. In a North Ontario town, a girl named Fran joins Fagan on his quest for a new life, but her family pursues them and their plans are thwarted. *En Route* was shot last year in Boston and Canada, with a budget of about \$26,000. Faircloth wrote, directed, produced, and edited the film. *En Route*: Rough Road Productions, 47A N. Margin St., Boston, MA 02113; (617) 367-6494.

**Carnival in Q'eros Where the Mountains Meet the Jungle**, is the fourteenth work by filmmaker John Cohen. Shot high in the Peruvian Andes, within a remote community of Quechua Indians, the film documents an isolated, distant, secretive, self-protective, and toughened people. Referring to themselves as Incas, the people of Q'eros observe many indigenous ritual practices but remain a part of the contemporary world economy of bank loans and interest payments. Various anthropologists have studied the Q'eros before, but none have witnessed their carnival, which Cohen's 32-minute film documents. Cohen first visited the Q'eros in 1954, and he tried filming the carnival in 1984 but was stoned and beaten. Finally, along with the Peruvian anthropologist Juan Nuñez del Prado, Cohen was able to record the event. *Carnival in Q'eros Where the Mountains Meet the Jungle*: John Cohen, Tompkins Corners, Putnam Valley, NY 10579.

**Refugees in Our Backyard** is Georges Nahitchevansky and Helena Pollack Sultan's new documentary on the displacement and migration of Central Americans to the United States. Narrated by Sigourney Weaver, the 58-minute film

examines the political and economic turmoil that has devastated Central America and led to the migration of over 15 percent of the region's population. Against this backdrop of unrest, filmmakers Nahitchevansky and Sultan follow the hazardous journey of people northward to the US. They examine the debates and controversies surrounding the arrival of Central Americans and explore the attempts to survive here. *Refugees in Our Backyard*: First Run/Icarus Films, 153 Waverly Pl., New York, NY 10014; (212) 243-0600.



One of the highlights of the Glasgow, Scotland, City of Culture celebration is **The Well of Patience**, a video sculpture by artist Daniel Reeves. The installation, which was unveiled last June, invites the viewer to move around and into the center of a glowing cyclorama. Above and below are arrays of familiar objects and statues placed in spiral configurations. And standing in the center, above a slowly moving carousel, the spectator is surrounded by huge, moving imagery beamed onto curved screening material by a number of powerful video projectors. The effect was described by *ArtNews* as something akin to "being at the still point of the turning world." Many hours of material—gathered over a seven-year period from four continents—was edited down to three 91-minute videotapes exploring the dynamics of change and the impermanence of all things in the universe. *The Well of Patience* was created with support from public and private sources in Scotland and is sponsored by American Airlines and George Gilmore Metals. *The Well of Patience*: Daniel Reeves, 763 Washington St., New York, NY 10014; (212) 989-2025.

**Black Water**, a new film by Charlotte Cerf and Allen Moore, documents the case of the village of São Braz, a traditional fishing village in Bahia, Brazil, where the quality of life has been threatened by water pollution in the fishing grounds. *Black Water* observes the unique relationship of the traditional culture to its environment and how people react when that way of life is disrupted. The 28-minute film was directed by Moore and is based on two years of anthropological fieldwork by Cerf. It has already earned an honorable mention from the American Anthropological Association and an Estar Award from Earthwatch. The production of *Black Water* was funded by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, Earthwatch, the Maryland State Arts Council, and the Philadelphia Independent Film and Video Association. *Black Water*: Bahia Film Project, 108 Fitzwater St., Philadelphia, PA; (215) 755-3756.

While brushing her hair in the oppressive and still heat of an August afternoon, a woman, Eliza-

**Viewers of Daniel Reeves' *The Well of Patience* sit in a cyclorama, surrounded by video imagery, which Reeves has assembled as a 92-minute trilogy of videotapes.**

Courtesy videomaker

beth, slips in and out of consciousness. Images, usually confined by sleep, escape their bounds. Elizabeth's thoughts and space are infringed upon. She is able to glimpse the possibility of the fulfillment of desire, but the implications of that fulfillment threaten her. **Echolalia** is a new experimental film by Albert Gabriel Nigrin, inspired by the Rilke poem *Sonnets to Orpheus II, 14*. In the film, a woman is presented with an opportunity for flight, but the value of that opportunity is tempered with lessons learned from the myth of Icarus. The 13-minute work was coproduced by Nigrin and Dennis Benson, directed, shot and edited by Nigrin, and written by Benson. It was funded in part by a National Endowment for the Arts/American Film Institute MidAtlantic Region Media Arts Fellowship. *Echolalia*: Light Far May See Films, 55 Louis St., New Brunswick, NJ 09801; (201) 249-9623.

In an effort to help bridge the gap between organ donor and recipient in the African American community, independent producer Bettina L.



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Montez has completed **Brother's Keepers**, a new 27-minute video. The tape, sponsored by the Bay Area Video Coalition, is intended as a resource tool for both health care providers and grassroots organizations to address this neglected and critical concern in the United States. Principal photography for *Brother's Keepers* took place at the Howard University Transplant Center in Washington, D.C., which treats the largest minority transplant population in the country and features the world-renowned authority Dr. Clive Callendar. *Brothers Keepers*: AM Videos, 1 Hallidie Plaza, Suite 701, San Francisco, CA 94102; (415) 751-3268.

Los Angeles-based filmmaker Robert Hanson has just completed principle photography on the film short **Thank You Masked Man**. First created as a stand-up routine by Lenny Bruce, this satire on the Lone Ranger was recorded on Fantasy Records in 1963 and eventually adapted by Bruce for a short, animated film. In the new film, Hanson uses actors to read the dialogue written by Bruce. It is a parody that emerges as a vehicle for Bruce's social conscience, as the Masked Man pursues the good ole' boys of the Wild West and homophobes. Hanson first began work on the project several years ago while a student at Los Angeles City College's cinema department and hopes to complete it for festival screenings this winter. *Thank You Masked Man*: Robert Hanson, 510 E. Santa Anita, #110, Burbank, CA 91501; (818) 841-0028.

The relationship between a woman's body image and her quest for the idealized female form is the theme in **Mirror Mirror**, a new documentary by Jan Krawitz. Women of varying ages, sizes, and ethnicities appear on screen—with their faces obscured by a white mask—and comment on their own bodies with humor, candor, and sometimes pain. Krawitz creates a tension between these self-images and the ideal, as illustrated by mannequins and in a 1930s-era newsreel depicting a "perfect body parts" contest for women. Krawitz produced the 17-minute film with support from the Paul Robeson Fund and Women's Project of the Funding Exchange, the Southwest Alternative Media Project, the Women in Film Foundation, and the Pioneer Fund. *Mirror Mirror* premiered this fall at the Margaret Mead Film Festival and Denver International Film Festival. *Mirror Mirror*: Women Make Movies, 225 Lafayette St., #212, New York, NY 10012; (212) 925-0606; fax: (212) 925-2052.

A wacky wig store owner's brand new collection turns the tranquil little town of Espergusto topsy-turvy in **Cootie Garages**, a new comedy by writer-director Marcy Hedy Lynn. Shot in "faux technicolor," the 54-minute film tells the story of Wella Della Dondola (Jeanette Smith), a wig-maker whose newest customer, Miss Polly Wexler (Marie Antoinette), is magically transformed into characters both historical and hysterical each time she tries on a new wig. Two years in the making, *Cootie Garages* was awarded for Excellence in Art Direction and Cinematography at the





Wella (Jeanette Smith), surrounded by some of Polly's polymorphic personifications (all played by Marie Antoinette) in *Cootie Garages*, a new film by Marcy Hedy Lynn.

Courtesy filmmaker

New York University First Run Film Festival and screened last September at Anthology Film Archives in New York. *Cootie Garages*: Whim Wham Productions, 51 E. 10th St., #8, New York, NY 10003; (212) 529-2885.

A new women's collaborative has resulted in the production of *We Care: A Video for Care-providers of People Affected by AIDS*, produced by the Women's AIDS Video Enterprise in conjunction with the Brooklyn AIDS Task Force. The tape represents the work of an innovative project that sought to empower low-income,

minority women from Brooklyn to make their own video about the issues surrounding AIDS that are most important to them. As members of a model "video-support group," seven women met for six months with a social worker and a videomaker to discuss their needs as people affected by AIDS and to learn how to express these through video. WAVE is currently organizing screenings of *We Care* for various community organizations. *We Care*: WAVE; attn: Alexandra Juhasz, (212) 477-4768; or Glenda Smith, Brooklyn AIDS Task Force, (718) 596-4781.

*Sanctus*, a newly completed film by Barbara Hammer, uses media X-ray footage of moving images to create a film depicting the process of entering and passing through the human body. Hammer employs archival footage originally shot by James Sibley Watson, who made the 1929 experimental classic *Fall of the House of Usher*. The film's soundtrack, by Niel B. Rolnick, itself is a digital reconstruction of the sanctus section of the Mass as composed by Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, Merchant, and Byrd. The 16mm film, along with Hammer's videotape *Dr. Watson's X-Rays*, premiered at the Collective for Living Cinema in New York last December. *Sanctus*: Barbara Hammer, 55 Bethune St., #114G, New York, NY 10014; (212) 645-9077.

This fall, classrooms throughout the US and Canada viewed *Wordscape*, a new series of 16 quarter-hour video programs for grades four through six. Designed to enrich children's vocabularies, the informative series was produced by Tulsa, Oklahoma-based film/videomaker Cathey Edwards. Taped in the Oklahoma City area, *Wordscape* relies on local talent and locations to teach over 200 words in a variety of humorous scenes. *Wordscape* is a coproduction of the Agency for Instruction Technology and the Oklahoma Educational Television Authority. *Wordscape*: Cathey Edwards Productions, Box 52112, Tulsa, OK 74152-0112; (918) 599-0910.



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## Domestic

**ANN ARBOR FILM FESTIVAL**, Mar. 19-24, MI. Now in 29th yr, oldest 16mm fest in country is open to independent & experimental films that "demonstrate a high regard for film as creative medium." No formal cats. Last yr 273 films submitted & 72 shown. 3 person awards jury distributes \$7000 in prize money, incl. Best of Fest (\$1500); \$500 ea. to best documentary/animated/experimental films; Tom Berman Award (\$1250); Lawrence Kasdan Award (\$500); Peter Wilde Award (\$500); Marvin Felheim Award (\$500). Nat'l tour April through beginning of July consists of 4 hrs of winners & highlights of fest; rental fee paid to participating films. Entry fee: \$25 (\$30 foreign). Format: 16mm; prescreening on film only. Deadline: Feb. 15. Contact: Vicki Honeyman, fest director, Ann Arbor Film Festival, Box 8232, Ann Arbor, MI 48107; (313) 995-5356.

**ASIAN AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, June, NY. New film & video productions by established & emerging Asian & Asian American producers focus of this noncompetitive fest, now in 14th yr. Features & shorts accepted. Cats: experimental, doc, narrative, installations. Last yr featured 42 films, incl. several NYC & US premieres. Fest generally goes on 5 mo. tour of N. America after opening. Format: 35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette. Deadline: Mar. 1. Contact: Peter Chow, Asian American Int'l Film Festival, Asian CineVision, 32 E. Broadway, New York, NY 10002; (212) 925-8685; fax: (212) 925-8157.

**ATHENS INTERNATIONAL FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL**, Apr. 26-May 4, OH. Prizes totalling \$8000 awarded by fest guest artist/judges to films/tapes selected as competition finalists by prescreening committees comprising film/videomakers & other artists knowledgeable in ea. cat. Separate film & video competitions. Cats: narrative (traditional & experimental), doc (traditional & experimental), experimental, animation. Entry fees: \$25-50, depending on length. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 8mm, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Feb. 12 (film); Mar. 12 (video). Contact: Ruth Bradley, Athens International Film & Video Festival, Box 388, rm. 407, 175 W. Union St., Athens, OH 45701; (614) 593-1330.

**BLACK TALKIES ON PARADE FILM FESTIVAL**, Apr. 22-29, CA. Works of all genres by & abt African Americans shown in competitive fest held at LA's Four Star Theatre. Cash awards up to \$3000. Sponsored by Black American Cinema Society. For info & appl., send legal size SASE. Formats: 16mm, 3/4". Deadline: Mar. 1. Contact: Mayme A. Clayton, Black Talkies on Parade Film Festival, 3617 Montclair St., Los Angeles, CA 90018; (213) 737-3292; fax: (213) 733-9511.

**BOULDER INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL FILM FESTIVAL**, Mar. 13-17, CO. Sponsored by Denver Int'l Film Society, invitational, noncompetitive event debuts in 1991 w/ environmentally themed entries in film & video cats: shorts, docs, features, fictional narrative, experimental, animation. 30-50 films/videos to be shown. Fest also features World Congress of Environmental Media, panels & seminars examining various aspects of entertainment/environment link, compilation of raw environmental film/video footage & Green Schools program at local schools. Entries must be completed after Dec. 31, 1988 (foreign entries after Dec. 31, 1985 if US premieres). No entry fee; producers cover roundtrip print shipping. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Deadline: Feb. 8. Contact: Denver Int'l Film Society, 999 18th St., ste. 247, Denver, CO 80202; (303) 298-8223; fax: (303) 298-0209.

**This month's festivals have been compiled by Kathryn Bowser, director of the FIVF Festival Bureau. Listings do not constitute an endorsement. Since some details change faster than we do, we recommend that you contact the festival for further information before sending prints or tapes. In order to improve our reliability and make this column more beneficial to independents, we encourage all film-and videomakers to contact FIVF Festival Bureau with their personal festival experiences, positive and negative.**

**CINCINNATI ARTISTS GROUP EFFORT WORKS BY WOMEN FILM FESTIVAL**, Apr. 19, OH. All genres of films by women accepted for new competitive fest, especially work by new filmmakers. Entries should be under 20 min., completed after Jan. 1989. Rental fees paid. Format: 16mm. Deadline: Mar. 1. Contact: Ann Alter, exhibition coordinator, Box 5657, Athens, OH 45701; for further info: Peter Allison, CAGE, 305 W. Fourth St., Cincinnati, OH 45202; (513) 381-2437.

**HOMETOWN USA VIDEO FESTIVAL**, July 25, OR. Sponsored by Nat'l Federation of Local Cable Programmers (NFLCP), competitive fest, started in 1977, recognizes outstanding local programs produced for or by local origination & public, educational & governmental access operations. Awards made to productions that address community needs, develop diverse community participation in production process, challenge conventional commercial TV formats & move viewers to look at TV differently. Entrants should be media pros or community volunteers. Awards: 3 special awards for overall excellence in public access programming, local origination, institutional access; finalists, honorable mentions & winners in 32 cats. Cats incl. performing arts, ethnic expression, entertainment, sports, by & for youth, live, municipal, religious, educational, instructional/training, informational, innovative, international, by & for senior citizens, PSA, doc profile/event/public awareness, video art, music video, local news, magazine format, original teleplay. Entries must be produced in previous yr. Fest receives 1800 entries from over 360 cities. Awards ceremony held during NFLCP annual convention in Portland, OR. Entry fees: \$20-\$50; incl. \$5 postage for return shipping. Formats: 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Mar. 8. Contact: Sue Buske, c/o The Buske Group, 3112 "O" St., ste. 1, Sacramento, CA 95816; (916) 456-0776; fax: (916) 731-7242.

**HOUSTON INTERNATIONAL FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL**, Apr. 19-28, TX. Estab. 1979, competitive fest has grown to event attracting over 3000 entries from 43 countries, premiering over 100 features & 24 shorts, docs & experimental productions. Cats: feature, short, documentary, TV commercials, experimental/independent, TV production, w/ over 150 subcats incl.

animation, scripts, music TV, ecology, student, industrial. Awards: Gold Grand Award in ea. major cat; Gold Special Jury Award; Gold, Silver & Bronze Awards for subcats; \$1000 to best student entry. This yr. fest established WorldFest Film & Video Market to run concurrently w/ fest, offering features, docs, shorts, video & TV shows to buyers & distributors. Also initiated works-in-progress section in market. Fest entry fee: \$25-\$100. Market entry fee: \$200. Formats: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm, super 8, 3/4", 1/2". Beta. Deadline: Mar. 15. Contact: J. Hunter Todd, executive director, Houston Int'l Film & Video Festival, Box 56566, Houston, TX 77250-6566; (713) 965-9955; fax: (713) 965-9960; telex: 317 876 (WORLDVEST HOU).

**HUMBOLDT FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL**, April, CA. Oldest student run fest in US, open to contemporary work of personal vision by independents & students. Program incl. lectures, workshops & screenings. All genres accepted. Works must be completed w/in past 3 yrs & not over 60 min. in length. \$3000 in awards & prizes; special awards incl. young filmmaker (under 18); social &/or environmental awareness; Salvador Dali Memorial Award for Best in Surrealist Film; Gale Anne Hurd Award for Best Woman Filmmaker. Entry fee: \$25. Formats: 16mm, super 8, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Mar. 5. Contact: Heather I. Denton, Humboldt Film & Video Festival, Dept. of Theatre Arts, Humboldt State Univ., Arcata, CA 95521; (707) 826-4113.

**INTERNATIONAL WILDLIFE FILM FESTIVAL**, Apr. 4-7, MT. Films & videos w/ major focus on any nondomesticated wildlife species eligible for competition, as well as productions concerned w/ habitat or its destruction, conservation, ecology, research, plants, special art forms, or people's interaction in relation to wildlife species. Cats: agency/private group; independent; low-budget independent, music video; PSA; student/amateur; TV news feature; TV news spot; TV series episode; TV special; art/experimental; children's; hunting/fishing; human dimensions; indigenous people; wildlife habitat/environmental concerns. Great Bear Award for Best of Fest. Entries must be produced, completed, or released during 1990. Other fest activities incl. panel discussions, workshops, wildlife art displays, photo contest, speakers, field trips. Formats: 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: \$25-125. Deadline: Mar. 1. Contact: Charles Jonkel, Int'l Wildlife Film Festival, Box 9383, 280 E. Front, Missoula, MT 59807; (406) 728-9380; fax: (406) 543-6232.

**LOUISVILLE FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL**, Feb. 21-23, KY. Experimental & independent film & video accepted in cats of experimental, doc, animation, narrative & music video for 2nd annual edition. \$2000 in cash awards. Work must be completed after Jan. 1, 1988. Special stipends available for women filmmakers living in KY. Sponsored by Artswatch, nonprofit Louisville-based contemporary arts organization. Entry fee: \$25. Formats: 16mm, super 8, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Jan. 24. Contact: Artswatch, 2337 Frankfort Ave., Louisville, KY 40206; (502) 893-9661.

**NEW JERSEY YOUNG FILM AND VIDEO MAKERS FESTIVAL**, May, NJ. Entrants whose current or family residence is in NJ eligible to enter fest celebrating student talent. Cats: elementary, middle, jr. HS, HS, college, university, independent. Any style, on any subject, max. 30 min., completed after Jan. 1, 1989. Entry fee: \$15. Formats: 16mm, super 8, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Mar. 15. Contact: Robert E. Lynch, NJ Young Film & Videomakers' Festival, c/o Humanities Dept, NJ Inst. of Technology, Newark, NJ 07102; (201) 596-



3281; fax: (201) 565-0586.

**RIVERTOWN (MINNEAPOLIS-ST. PAUL) INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, early May, MN. Growing noncompetitive fest, establ. in 1983, has become 1 of largest (audiences of over 24,000) in upper Midwest region w/ abt 90 features shown, selected shorts or featurettes; programs contemporary int'l films; US independent work; different nat'l cinema ea. yr, commercial features for opening & closing. Schedule incl. abt 6 US premieres & occasional world premieres. Votes on Best of Fest film in several cats, incl. children's, feature, short, actor, actress, based on audience poll. Fest may bring in filmmakers; coordinates w/ State Film Board & IFP/North on seminars. Screenings centered at U. of MN campus; other venues, incl. Walker Art Center. No entry fee. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; possibility of video screenings. Deadline: Apr. 1. Contact: Al Milgrom, Rivertown (Minneapolis-St. Paul) Int'l Film Festival, 425 Ontario St., SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414; (612) 627-4432; fax: (612) 627-4430; telex: 401514 UMFILMSOC UD.

**ROCHESTER INTERNATIONAL AMATEUR FILM FESTIVAL**, May 3-4, NY. Sponsored by Movies on a Shoestring, group of western NY film buffs, fest establ. in 1959 & open to films made w/out any intention of financial gain. Member of Int'l Assoc. of Amateur Film Festivals. No formal cats.; every entry reviewed, w/ critique prepared & sent to filmmaker. Prizes incl. Shoestring trophies & honorable mention certificates; fest held at Dryden Theater at George Eastman House. Attending filmmakers receive housing. Selected films from ea. fest assembled into travelling show. Entries should be under 30 min. Entry fee: \$15. Formats: 16mm, super 8, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Mar. 1. Contact: Josephine M. Perini, Rochester Int'l. Amateur Film Festival, Box 17746, Rochester, NY 14617; (716) 288-5607.

**SEATTLE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, May 16-June 9, WA. 1 of largest noncompetitive fests in Northwest US, founded in 1976; features (over 60 min.) & shorts (under 20 min.) programmed. Last yr 139 films from 40 countries screened, w/ several US & world premieres. Program also incl. special events (tributes, seminars, midnight special screenings). Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette. Entry fee: \$50 (features), \$10 (shorts). Deadline: Mar. 15. Contact: Darryl MacDonald, Seattle Int'l Film Festival, 801 E. Pine St., Seattle, WA 98122; (206) 324-9996; fax: (206) 324-9998; telex: 329 473 BURGESS-SEA attn: SFF.

**UNITED STATES INDUSTRIAL FILM FESTIVAL**, June 7, IL. Competitive int'l fest devoted exclusively to sponsored & industrial & business films & videos. Cats: advertising/sales/promotion; agriculture/forestry/oceanography; art/culture; career guidance; community development; documentary; education; employee relations/dealer communications; environment/energy/conservation; fundraising; history/biography; industrial/technical processes; medicine/health; nature/wildlife; politics; public relations; recreation; religion; safety/insurance; sciences; specialty productions; TV commercials; TV/home video programming; training; travel/geography/transportation. Awards: Gold Camera Award, Silver Screen Award, Certificate of Creative Excellence. Entries must have been completed since Mar. 1. 1990. Formats: 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: \$130. Deadline: Mar. 1. Contact: J.W. Anderson, chairman/Patricia A. Meyer, executive director, US Industrial Film & Video Festival, 841 N. Addison Ave., Elmhurst, IL 60126-1291; (708) 834-7773; fax: (708) 834-5565.

**USA FILM FESTIVAL**, Apr. 18-25, TX. Fest has 3 major components—major noncompetitive feature section (now in 21st yr); a National Short Film & Video Competition (in 13th yr); & KidFilm (held Jan. 18-21) for shorts & features. Feature section programmed by artistic dir. To submit feature or short film for consideration, send preview cassette w/ publicity & production info. Short film/video competition showcases new & significant US work. Entries should be under 60 min., completed after Jan. 1, 1990. Cash prizes in amount of \$6750 awarded in cats of narrative (\$1000), nonfiction (\$1000), animation (\$1000), experimental (\$1000), creative commercials (\$1000), Charles Samu Award (\$500), 5 Special Jury Awards (\$250). Grand Prize winner flown to Dallas to receive cash, award & present winning film/video. Formats: 3/4", 1/2", Beta, 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: Mar. 1 (short film & video competition); Mar. 8 (festival). Contact: Richard Peterson, artistic director/Ann Alexander, managing director, USA Film Festival, 2917 Swiss Ave., Dallas, TX 75226; (214) 821-6300; fax: (214) 821-6364.

**VERMONT WORLD PEACE FILM FESTIVAL**, June 26-30, VT. Peace, justice & environment are themes of competitive biennial fest inaugurated in 1985 w/ purpose of advancement of public education & awareness of issues concerning global ecological crisis & need for peace economy. Cats: nuclear disarmament, struggle for peace & justice, intervention in 3rd world, building ecological security. All genres. Program also incl. seminars & panel discussions. Entry fees: vary w/length. Format: 16mm, fest considering video sidebar. Deadline: Mar. 1. Contact: Lorraine B. Good-Samsom, Vermont World Peace Film Festival, 3A Rockland St., Burlington, VT 05401; (802) 660-8201; fax: (802) 658-3311.

**VIDEO SHORTS**, April, WA. Winners receive \$100 honorarium & nonexclusive distribution contract. 6 min. max. length per entry. Entry fee: \$15; \$7 for ea. add'l entry on same cassette. Formats: 3/4", 3/4" SP, 8mm, 1/2", hi-8. Deadline: Feb. 1. Contact: Mike Cady, Video Shorts, Box 20369, Seattle, WA 98102; (206) 325-8449.

**WASHINGTON DC INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL /FILMFEST DC**, April, DC. Invitational, curated noncompetitive fest of more than 50 int'l features & shorts. Washington, DC premieres. Features, docs, short films under 15 min. & films for children (free Filmfest DC for Kids) accepted. Fest also sponsors workshops & symposia featuring filmmakers, media professionals & scholars. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: Feb. 1. Contact: Filmfest DC, Box 21396, Washington, DC 20009; (202) 727-2396.

## Foreign

**BANFF TELEVISION FESTIVAL**, June 2-8, Canada. Int'l competitive event for TV productions completed & shown for first time in yr preceding fest. Cats: TV features (70 min. or more); limited series (3 or more evening installments); continuing series, short dramas, comedies, social/political documentaries; popular science programs, arts docs, performance specials, children's programs. TV features & feature length docs awarded in other int'l Canadian fests not eligible. Awards: Rockie bronze sculpture to best in ea. cat; Grand Prize (\$5000 Cdn.); 2 special awards (\$2500 Cdn.). All competition entries receive certificates. Entry fee: \$175 Cdn. (may be subject to 7% GST). Formats: 3/4". Deadline: Mar. 15 (entry forms); Mar. 28 (cassettes). Contact: Jerry Ezekiel, Banff Television Festival, 306-

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**BULGARIA INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF COMEDY FILMS**, May, Bulgaria. Biennial competition now in 6th yr. Entries should be produced since 1987. Sections: Cinema: features, medium & short films; TV: feature, medium & short length. Work judged by int'l jury; fest's Grand Prix named in honor of Charlie Chaplin. Special prize for children's comedy, satirical films; prizes also for full-length feature (TV & film), best actress/actor, best direction. Org. Committee may invite makers of selected entries, covering costs of stay in Gabrovo. No entry fee. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4" (PAL TV productions only). Deadline: Mar. 1. Contact: Stefan Furtounov, Int'l Festival of Comedy Films, House of Humour & Satire, 5300 Gabrovo, Bulgaria; tel: 27229/27125; telex: 67413.

**CANNES INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, May 9-20, France. 44th yr of largest int'l fest, attended by over 35,000 guests, incl. stars, directors, distributors, buyers & journalists. Intensive round-the-clock activities encompass numerous screenings, parties, ceremonies, press conferences & one of world's major film markets (w/ 100s of films); screening or award at Cannes provides fame & prestige for filmmaker. Selection Committee, appointed by Administration Board, chooses entries for Official Competition (abt 20 films) & for Un Certain Regard section. Films must be made w/in prior 12 mo., released only in country of origin & not entered in other film festivals. Official selection consists of 3 sections: In Competition, features & shorts compete for major fest awards (Palme d'Or, Special Jury Prize, Best Director/Actress/Actor/Artistic Contribution); Special Out-of-Competition, features ineligible for competition (e.g. films by previous winners of Palme d'Or); Un Certain Regard (noncompetitive) for films of int'l quality, which for various reasons do not qualify for Competition, significant works in the fields of innovative features, films by new directors, etc. Parallel sections incl. Quinzaine des Realisateurs (Directors' Fortnight), main sidebar for new talent/innovations, sponsored by Assoc. of French Film Directors; La Semaine de la Critique (Int'l Critics Week), selection of 1st or 2nd features & docs chosen by members of French Film Critics Union (selections must be completed w/in 2 yrs prior to fest) & Perspectives on French Cinema. Market, administered separately, screens films in main venue & local theater. Top prizes incl. Official Competition's Palme d'Or (feature & short) & Camera d'Or (best 1st film in any section). For info & accreditation, contact: Catherine Verret, French Film Office, 745 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10151; (212) 832-8860, fax: (212) 755-0629. Official Section: Festival International du Film (deadline Mar. 1), 71, rue du Faubourg St. Honore, 75008 Paris, France; tel: 1 46 66 92 20, fax: 1 42 66 68 85, telex: FESTIFI 650 765 F. Quinzaine des Realisateurs (deadline Apr. 17), Societe des Realisateurs de Films, 215 Faubourg St. Honore, 75008 Paris, France; tel: 1 45 61 01 66, fax: 1 40 74 07 96. Semaine International de la Critique (deadline Mar. 1), Claude Beylie, president, 90, rue d'Amsterdam, 75009 Paris, France; tel: 1 40 16 98 30. Cannes Film Market, attn: Marcel Lathiere, Michel P. Bonnet, 71, rue du Faubourg St. Honore, 75008 Paris, France, tel: 1 42 66 92 20; fax: 1 42 66 68 85; telex: FESTIFI 650765.

**COGNAC INTERNATIONAL THRILLER FILM FESTIVAL**, March, France. Established in 1982, IFFPA-recognized 4-day event screens new feature thrillers in competition. Program also incl. shorts competition,

noncompetitive sidebars, & special programs. Formats: 35mm, 16mm (French shorts only). Deadline: Feb. 1. Contact: Lionel Chouchan, Int'l Thriller Film Festival of Cognac, Promo 2000, 33 Ave. MacMahon, 75017 Paris, France; tel: 33 1 42677140; fax: 33 1 46228851; telex: 640736.

**GOLDEN PRAGUE INTERNATIONAL TELEVISION FESTIVAL**, June, Czechoslovakia. 28th annual competition in 2 cats: TV drama & TV music programs. Entries must be original programs under 90 min. (60 min. for music programs) created esp. for TV, produced after Jan. 1, 1990 & not screened at other int'l fest competitions. Awards: Dramatic: Golden Prague for best entry, Prize of Union of Czechoslovak Dramatic Artists, Intervention Prize, Prize of Czechoslovak TV viewers; Music: Golden Prague, Prize for best interpretation/exceptional contribution to field of TV music, Intervention Prize; Journalists Prizes. No entry fee. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 1" (PAL), 2" (PAL), 3/4" (PAL). Deadline: Mar. 5. Contact: Josef Houzvick, Golden Prague, Czechoslovak Television, 29 Gorkheho Namesti, 111 50 Prague 1, Czechoslovakia; tel: 2364760; fax: 42 22321342; telex: 121800.

**GOLDEN ROSE OF MONTREUX**, May 5-11, Switzerland. Light entertainment TV programs (comedy, music, variety) accepted in competition for fest, now in 31st yr. Last yr 71 entries from 29 countries judged & over 600 TV programming & production execs attended, as well as over 100 journalists. Conference sessions. Entries must be televised for 1st time in 14 mo. prior to awards ceremony; between 24-60 min. in length. Awards: Golden Rose of Montreux (10,000 Swiss francs); Silver Rose, Bronze Rose, Special Prize of City of Montreux (funniest). Concurrent competitions held for network entries & entries from ind. producers/distributors. Entry fee: 500 Swiss francs. Format: 3/4". Deadline: Mar. 15. Contact: Jean-Luc Balmer, director, Golden Rose of Montreux, Golden Rose Contest Secretariat, Swiss Broadcasting Corporation, C.P. 234, CH-1211 Geneva 8, Switzerland. NY contact: John Nathan, Golden Rose of Montreux, 509 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10022; (212) 223-0044; fax: (212) 223-4531.

**HAMBURG NO BUDGET SHORT FILM FESTIVAL**, May, Germany. Independently made short films & videos produced "cheaply, quickly & cheekily" accepted. Entries must be under 15 min. & cost of production should not exceed 10,000 DM (\$6776). Jury & audience awards Hamburg Prize for New Blood for furtherance of int'l short film (20,000 DM). 3 Minute Quick section accepts works under 3 min. produced on subject of money, awarded by audience; Steppin' Out section held for shorts w/ production costs over 10,000 DM (under 15 min.). No entry fee. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, super 8, 3/4", 1/2", Beta. Deadline: Mar. 31. Contact: Markus Schaefer, No Budget Short Film Festival, Glashüttenstrasse 7, 2000 Hamburg 36, Germany; tel: 040 434499; fax: 040 4302703.

**LAON INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**, March, France. Established in 1983, competitive fest programs films for children, incl. animated cartoons & puppet films. Shorts shown out of competition. Fest has int'l young people's jury. Awards incl. Grand Prix, int'l jury prize, public award, CIFEJ (Int'l Center for Youth & Children's Films) award. Entries should be completed in previous 2 yrs. All lengths & genres. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Contact: Marie-Therese Chambon, Festival International du Cinema Jeune Public de Laon, Maison des Arts et Loisirs, Place Aubry, B.P. 526, 02001 Laon Cedex,

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**LA ROCHELLE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, June, France. Noncompetitive fest accepts narrative feature auteur films screened in 2 main sections: homages to working filmmakers & The World as It Is section of previously unseen films. About 70 films shown ea. yr, w/ abt 40 premieres; debates scheduled w/ directors. Deadline: Mar. 30. Contact: Jean-Loup Passek, Festival Int'l du Film de La Rochelle, 28, Blvd. du Temple, 75011 Paris, France; tel: 43 57 61 24; fax: 48 06 50 22; telex: D2 CDG 230 168F.

**LES ENFANTS LUMIERE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL ON CHILDHOOD**, April 9-16, France. Debut yr, accepts films on childhood. Sections: Competition: 35mm fiction films; Discovery: 35mm fiction films for young audiences; Information: docs in any format on current childhood events in world; Retrospective (Childhood & Law). Awards: Grand Prix (\$30,000); Prix Public (\$10,000); Short Film Award (\$3,000); Best Doc (\$10,000). Rep. of each selection invited w/ trans. & 3 nights hotel. French premieres required, completed aft. Jan. 1, 1989. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", Beta. Deadline: Jan. 31. Contact: Loic Grelier, Les Enfants Lumiere, 7, rue Jules-Chalande, 31000 Toulouse, France; tel: 61 23 33 37; fax: 61 23 63 33.

**MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, June 7-23, Australia. Celebrating 40th anniv., Melbourne is 1 of Australia's 2 largest fests & its oldest. Programs eclectic mix of genres of independent work showing "innovation & originality" w/ special interest in feature docs & shorts. Each yr premieres substantial program of new Australian cinema. Int'l short film competition

(now in 29th yr) important part of program, w/ cash prizes in 7 cats: Grand Prix (\$4000), Documentary (\$1500), Fiction (\$1500), Experimental (\$1500), Student (\$1500), Animation (\$1500), Children's (potentially lucrative distribution offer from State Film Centre of Victoria). Fest especially looking for entries for children's section. Competition entries must be completed on 35mm or 16mm, under 60 min. since Jan. 1990. Fest also screens programs of super 8 & videos, out of competition. Fests may be useful window to Australian theatrical & nontheatrical/educational distributors & new Australian TV networks interested in buying shorts. Entry fee: A\$20 (abt \$15). Formats: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm, super 8, 3/4". Deadline: Mar. 22. Contact: Tait Brady, director, Melbourne Int'l Film Festival, Box 12367, A'Beckett St. Post Office, Melbourne 3000, Australia; tel: 03 663-2953/663-1896; fax: 03 662-1218; telex: 152613 FIFEST.

**MONTBELIARD INTERNATIONAL VIDEO AND TELEVISION FESTIVAL**, June, France. 6th yr of int'l competition for all cats of video, w/ proof of personal research evident in form. Entries must have been produced after Sept. 1989, originated on video, over 5 min. For accepted works, fest provides travel & hotel for one rep. Awards: 1st Prize: 100,000FF; 2nd Prize: 50,000FF; 3rd Prize: 25,000FF; various additional awards. In addition to competition, program features screenings & tributes to French & int'l artists; installations; theatrical, choreographic, musical & video performances; meetings w/ directors; int'l lectures on culture & TV & Videothèque Ad Libitum for work out of competition. Entry fee: 250FF. Formats: 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Mar. 31. Contact: Pierre Bongiovanni, Manifestation Internationale de Video et de TV de

Montbeliard, B.P. 236, 25204 Montbeliard Cedex, France; tel: 81 91 37 11; fax: 81 91 10 25; telex: 202 139 F RCINF ATTN PB69 BONGIOVA.

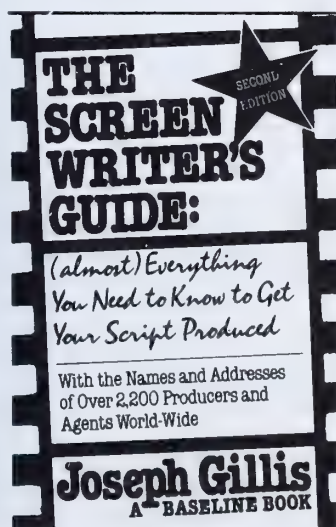
**MONTREAL INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF YOUNG CINEMA**, May, Canada. Work of young independent & nonpro filmmakers accepted for competitive fest, estab. in 1980 & sponsored by Association pour le Jeune Cinema Quebecois in collaboration w/ regional groups. Work must be produced after Jan. 1, 1989, under 30 min., not intended for theater & TV exhibition or shown commercially in theaters or on Canadian TV. Fiction, doc, animation, experimental. Entry fee: \$20 (incl. return shipping). Formats: 16mm, super 8, 3/4", 1/2", Beta. Deadline: Mar. 9. Contact: Mario Pierre Paquet/Denis Laplante, Festival International du Jeune Cinema, 4545 Av. Pierre-de-Coubertin, C.P. 1000 Succ. M, Montreal, Quebec, H1V 3R2, Canada; (514) 252-3024; fax: (514) 251-8038; telex: 05-829647.

**NORTHEASTERN ANTHROPOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION FILM SCREENINGS**, March, Canada. Ethnographic filmmaking shown at annual meetings of assoc.; doc, experimental, educational, animated, TV, health/medical/scientific works accepted. Formats: 3/4", 1/2", 16mm. Deadline: Mar. 1. Contact: Patrick Dionne, Commission on Visual Anthropology, Dept. of Anthropology, Universite de Montreal, Box 6128, Station "A" Montreal, Quebec, H3C 3J7, Canada; tel: (514) 343-6565; fax: (514) 343-2494.

**OBERHAUSEN FESTIVAL OF SHORT FILMS**, April 24-30, Germany. From Feb. 4-8, FIVF hosts rep of Oberhausen during NYC preselection screening of shorts for 1991 fest. Now in 37th edition, fest showcases innovative independent & experimental

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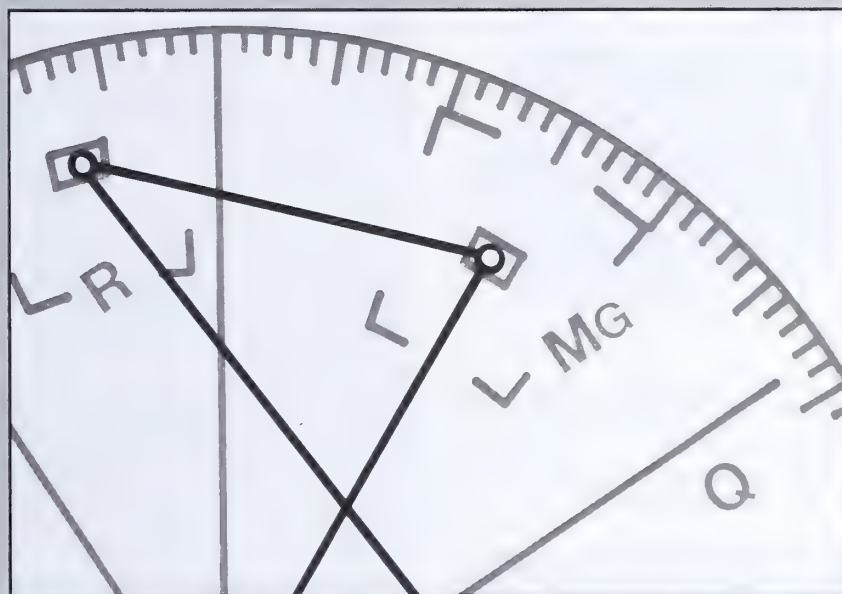


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short & documentary films of all genres. Competitive event recognized by IFFPA, programming work in cats of social documentation, new developments in animation, experimental & short feature films. student film (esp. from film schools), first films & works from developing countries. Sections: int'l competition (film only, length up to 35 min., approx 20 prizes w/ cash awards from 2,000-10,000DM, completed after Jan. 1, 1989, unawarded in other IFFPA fests, German premiere); German program; special program 1 (films/videos dealing w/ people of different languages, cultures, religions, castes, nationalities, ethnic groups living together; up to 45 min.); special program 2 (films/videos reacting aesthetically to current political & media/technological changes, up to 45 min.); special program 3 (short film programs from various TV orgs, related seminar sponsored by Medien-operative Berlin on developing new models of cooperation for production & broadcast of short films on TV); special program 4 (selection from 1st final class at Int'l School of Film & TV in Cuba); seminar on small film w/in big film; commercials, video sports & influence on dramaturgy of features. Fest staff travels world for selection. 22nd Filmotheque of Youth (Apr. 20-30) will be held as part of fest. Entries should not be longer than 35 min.; in certain cases docs may be 60 min. Future editions will focus on commercial genres of short film—1992: advertising; 1993: industrials. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, super 8; preview on 3/4" or 1/2" only. Entry fee: \$15, payable to FIVF. Deadline: Jan. 25. For info & appl., send SASE or contact: Kathryn Bowser, Festival Bureau, FIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th fl., New York, NY 10012; (212) 473-3400. Festival address: Angela Haardt, director, Jochen Coldewey, deputy director, Internationale Kurzfilmtage Oberhausen, Christian-Stegerstrasse 10, 4200 Oberhausen 1, Germany; tel: (208) 807008; fax: (208) 852591; telex: 856414 kuobd.

**SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL**, June 7-21. Australia. Fest dir. Paul Byrnes will again visit FIVF this yr. at the end of February to seek out US independent entries for the next edition. He is particularly looking for feature documentaries & several shorts, w/ preference for those under 30 min. Sydney is 1 of Australia's major film events and 1 of world's oldest fests, now in 38th yr. Noncompetitive int'l program mixes features, shorts, docs & retros in selection of over 130 films from several countries. Many films shown at Sydney shared w/ Melbourne Film Festival, which runs almost concurrently. Most Australian distribs & TV buyers attend fest, which has enthusiastic & loyal audience. Provides excellent opportunity for filmmakers to gain publicity & access to Australian markets. Each yr. fest conducts audience survey, w/ results provided to participating filmmakers. Entries must be Australian premieres completed in previous yr. Fest pays roundtrip group shipment of selected films from FIVF office. Formats: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm; preview on 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: \$20, payable to FIVF. Deadline: Feb. 15. For info & applications, send SASE or contact: Kathryn Bowser, Festival Bureau, FIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th fl., New York, NY 10012; (212) 473-3400. Festival address: Paul Byrnes, fest director, Sydney Film Festival, Box 25, Glebe NSW 2037, Australia; tel: (02) 660-3844; fax: (02) 692-8793; telex: AA75111.

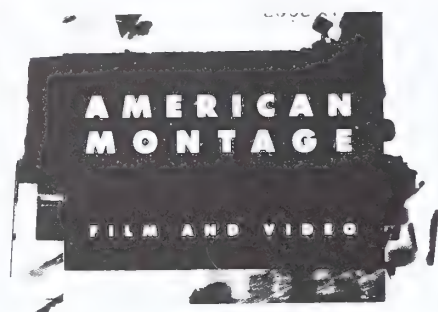
**TRENTO INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF MOUNTAIN, EXPLORATION AND ADVENTURE FILMS**, April 21-27, Italy. Competitive fest accepts films/videos in

cats: mountains (in human, social, alpine, sports aspects); exploration (scientific/adventurous, territories, waters, flora & fauna, environmental conservation); adventure (sport not aimed at violence against man or environment); sport (winter sports incl. sports climbing); video. Films & videos judged together. Awards: L. 10 million (1st prize); L. 5 million (best documentary, best fiction); L. 3 million in ea. of 5 official cats. Deadline: Mar. 15. Contact: Filmfestival Internazionale Montagna Esplorazione Avventura "Citta di Trento," C.P. 402, Centro S. Chiara, Via S. Croce, 67, 38100 Trento, Italy; tel: 0461 986120; fax: 0461 237832.

**VARNA INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF RED CROSS AND HEALTH FILMS**, May 25-June 2, Bulgaria. Biennial IFFPA-recognized competition for films w/ Red Cross, health, ecological, humanitarian related subjects, under theme Through Humanity to Peace & Friendship. Now in 14th edition, fest attracts over 300 entries from 55 nations & 5 int'l orgs. Entries must be completed after Jan. 1, 1989. All genres of features, shorts, medium length & TV films. Awards: feature: Grand Prix, Prizes for best direction/actor/actress, Special Prize of Red Cross to best film w/ humanitarian character; short & medium length: Golden Ship Grand Prix of President of Bulgarian Red Cross, Grand Prix of Red Cross for best Red Cross film, Grand Prix for best health film, Special Prize for best scientific or instructional film, 1st Prize (Gold Medal), 2nd Prize (Silver Medal); TV programs: Grand Prix, 1st Prize (Gold Medal), 2nd Prize (Silver Medal), Special Prize for film on health education. No entry fee. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Deadline: Mar. 25. Contact: Alexander Marinov, Int'l Festival of Red Cross & Health Films, Sofia 1527, Blvd. Biruzov 1, Bulgaria; tel: 457280; fax: 441759; telex: 23248 bchkg.

**VIDEO POSITIVE**, May, England. Established in 1989, noncompetitive video fest accepts experimental, art, animated & computer art video productions. Formats: 3/4", 1/2", Beta, super 8. Deadline: Jan. 31. Contact: Eddie Berg, Video Positive '91, 40A Bluecoat Chambers, School Lane, Liverpool, L1 3BX, England; tel: (051) 709 2663.

**YAMAGATA INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FILMFESTIVAL**, Oct. 7-13, Japan. Biennial competitive fest, organized in 1989 to celebrate Yamagata City's 100th anniversary, is 1st int'l fest in Asia devoted exclusively to documentary. Sections incl. competition, special invitation, other screenings & events. Awards: Robert & Frances Flaherty Grand Prize (¥3,000,000); Mayor's Prize (¥1,000,000); 2 runner-up (¥300,000 ea.); Encouragement Prize (¥300,000); Special Prize (¥300,000). 1 rep of ea. selected film invited to fest w/ expenses covered. Films subtitled by fest & fest covers cost of subtitled print retained in fest archives. Films must be produced originally as documentaries, after April 1, 1989, preferably of 60 min. or more; must be Japanese premiere. No entry fee (enclose return postage or fest will keep entry in library). Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 1/2". Deadline: Mar. 31. Contact: Yukio Fukushima/Markus Nornes/Steven Teo, program coordinators, Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival, Tokyo Office (for collection of films, formation of jury, invitations, subtitling), Kitagawa Bldg. 4F, 6-42 Kagurazaka, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 162, Japan; tel: (03) 266-9704; fax: (03) 266-9700; telex: 2322240 CMX J. Yamagata Office (planning, general administration): International Relations Office, Yamagata City Office, General Affairs, Hatagocho 2-3-25, Yamagata 990, Japan; tel: (0236) 41-1212; fax: (0236) 24-9618.



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**FOR SALE:** Panasonic 3/4" editing system NV 9240-NV 9600, NVA 500 controller: \$5,000. (914) 271-2066.

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## Freelancers

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**16MM CUTTING ROOMS:** 8-plate & 6-plate fully equipped rooms, sound transfer facilities, 24-hr access. Downtown, near all subways & Canal St. Reasonable, negotiable rates. (212) 925-1500.

**BROADCAST QUALITY EDITING:** Edit from Betacam, 3/4" or 3/4" SP. \$99/hr including operator, switcher, slo-mo. 50% discount on DVE for AIVF members. Call HDTV Enterprises, near Lincoln Center (212) 874-4524.

**COZY & CHEAP:** 3/4" off-line editing room w/ new Sony 5850, 5800, RM440. \$500/week, \$150/day. Midtown location, 24-hr access. Fax, xerox & dubbing services available. Call Jane at (212) 929-4795 or Deborah at 226-2579.

**IN LOS ANGELES:** 3/4" & VHS off-line editing rooms for rent. KEM flatbed, Moviola, sound transfer & audio sweetening also avail. Call Sim Sadler or Helen Crosby-Garcia at Finale Post-Production, (213) 461-6216.

**VIDEO EDITING:** Edit your project in the evenings. We have a great off-line system with Amiga graphics, mixer & time code. Call Al and we'll work out a great deal. (212) 620-9157.

**TOTAL SUPER 8 SOUND** film services. All S-8 production, postprod, editing, sync sound, sound mix, multitrack, single & double system sound editing, transfers, stills, etc. Send SASE for rate sheet or call Bill Creston, 727 6th Ave., NY, NY 10010; (212) 924-4893.

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## Films ■ Tapes Wanted

**BROOKLYN MUSEUM** seeks high quality 35mm & 16mm films & single-channel video for fall 1991 series of work by & about Native Americans. Narrative, doc & experimental work under 60 min., submitted on 1/2" or 3/4", should address Native Amer. art, culture, history & political activism. Deadline: Apr. 15, 1991. Send video, submissions & SASE to: Dara Meyers-Kingsley, Film & Video Programs, Brooklyn Museum, 200 Eastern Pkwy, Brooklyn, NY 11238.

**COMEDIC FILMS OR ANIMATION** under 5 min. sought by producer of nat'l TV show. Send VHS copy w/ SASE to: Creative Resources Prods, Ste. 900, 701 Seventh Ave., New York, NY 10036.

**IMAGE UNION**, a weekly 1/2-hr showcase of ind. film/video on Chicago public TV, seeks submissions no longer than 27 min. on 3/4" cassette. Send tapes to: Image Union, WTTW/Chicago, 5400 N. St. Louis Ave., Chicago, IL 60625.

**MEDIA CENTER AT VISUAL STUDIES WORKSHOP** seeks regional electronic arts for spring 1991 exhibition at VSW's Gallery Viewing/Listening Room, cablecast on CPN 12 public access & broadcast on WBER 90.5 FM. Incl. audio art & doc, experimental music, video, computer graphics & animation. Artist paid exhibition fee. Deadline: Feb. 15. Contact: Northeast Regional Electronic Arts Exhibition, Media Center at VSW, 31 Prince St., Rochester, NY 14607; (716) 442-8676.

**MIXED SIGNALS**, New England cable TV series, accepting appls for spring 1991 series. Entries must be no more than 56 min. Formats: 3/4", 1/2", or 16mm. Artists w/ selected work receive \$30/min. Deadline: Jan. 15. Send work w/ self-addressed return mailer to: New England Foundation for the Arts, 678 Massachusetts Ave., Suite 801, Cambridge, MA 02139.

**NATIONAL COUNCIL ON FAMILY RELATIONS MEDIA AWARDS COMPETITION**, June, MN. Marriage & family topics recognized in 23rd yr of competition. Cats: human development across life span, parenting issues, nontraditional family systems, marital/family issues & communication, sexuality/sex role development, substance abuse/addictions, human reproduction & more. Works must be completed after Jan. 1, 1989, nat'lly available for purchase or rental. Best of Category awards for each format. Entry fees: \$65-\$190, based on length. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 1/2". Deadline: Mar. 18 (video); Apr. 1 (film/filmstrip). Contact: Kristi Prince, NCFR Annual Media Awards Competition, 3989 Central Ave., NE, #550, Minneapolis, MN 55421; (612) 781-9331; fax: (612) 781-9348.

**NIGHTSHIFT** looking for all types of student films & videos for broadcast on Channel 5, WCVB-TV-Boston. Entering its 19th season, NightShift is New England's weekly student art showcase. Submit 3/4" videotapes & short bio to: Chay Yew, NightShift, WCVB-TV-Boston, 5 TV Place, Needham, MA 02194-2303; (617) 449-0400, ext. 4254.

**PACIFIC FILM ARCHIVE** seeks video art for two spring 1991 events: Native American works w/ emphasis on poetic, nonfiction approaches & "The Elements," tapes dealing with earth, air, water & fire. Honoraria to be paid. Send submissions to: Steve Seid, Pacific Film Archive, 2625 Durant Ave., Berkeley, CA 94720; (415) 642-5253.

**SOUTHERN CIRCUIT 1991-92** will tour 6 artists, who travel 10 days to 8 southern sites & present 1 show per

**Notices are listed free of charge. AIVF members receive first priority; others are included as space permits. The Independent reserves the right to edit for length. Deadlines for Notices will be respected. These are the 8th of the month, two months prior to cover date, e.g., February 8 for the April issue. Send to: Independent Notices, FIVF, 625 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.**

city. Interested artists should submit printed materials only, incl. resume & publicity, for 1st round in selection process. Deadline: Feb. 1, 1991. Contact: South Carolina Arts Commission, Media Arts Center, 1800 Gervais St., Columbia, SC 29201; attn: Susan Leonard.

**TAPESTRY INTERNATIONAL**, distrib. of ind. docs, drama, music & performance, seeks new work for foreign & domestic TV markets. Contact: Mary Boss, dir. of acquisitions, Tapestry Int'l, 924 Broadway, New York, NY 10010; (212) 677-6007; fax: (212) 473-8164.

**VIDEO RATING GUIDE FOR LIBRARIES** actively seeking videos for review. Quarterly mag. reviews & assigns star ratings to more than 2,000 VHS videos/yr. Subscribers are public, school & academic librarians who buy videos for nontheatrical distrib. Subs: \$110/yr. Contact: Gloria Gribble; (800) 422-2546, ext. 146.

## Opportunities ■ Gigs

**DIRECTORS GUILD of America & Alliance of Motion Picture & TV Producers**, now accepting appls for AD training program. 8-15 selected for training as 2nd ass't directors. Must be at least 21 yrs old w/ Associate of Arts or Sciences degree from accredited college. Appl. & supporting documents must be postmarked by Jan. 12. For appl., contact: Assistant Director Training Program, 14144 Ventura Blvd., Suite 255, Sherman Oaks, CA 91423; (818) 995-3600.

**HAMPSHIRE COLLEGE** seeks ass't professor of video prod/criticism for initial app't of 3 yr renewable contract beginning Sept. 1991. Position subject to funding. Preference given to candidates using doc or mixed forms to represent oppressed & minority groups or alternatives to dominant media. Critical/analytical approach to issues surrounding cultural prod. is essential. Strengths in minority/3rd World rep & writing for or about media esp. valued. Graduate study required, terminal degree &/or prof. exp. preferred. Minority candidates & women encouraged to apply. Comm. begins appl. review Feb. 15. Send letter, vitae & letters of recommendation to: Video Productions Search Committee, School of CCS, Hampshire College, Amherst, MA 01002.

**INDEPENDENT FEATURE PROJECT** seeks executive director as chief executive & primary spokesperson for

the organization. Qualifications: BA degree, 3-5 years financial & management experience, proven fundraising experience, highly developed org. skills & proven leadership ability. Appl. deadline: Jan. 31. Send resume & 3 letters of recommendation to: Search Committee/IFP, 132 W. 21st St., 6th fl., New York, NY 10011; fax: (212) 243-3882.

**INDIAN AMERICA**, 10-part doc TV series by Media Resources Associates on histories & cultures of Native America, seeks Native American media professionals & writers &/or talented would-be filmmakers for positions on series' creative teams. Send vitae, writing samples &/or sample tapes to: Robin Maw, Media Resource Associates, 3615 Wisconsin Ave., NW, Washington DC 20016; (202) 686-4457; fax: (202) 362-0110.

**NATIONAL DIRECTOR**: National Alliance of Media Arts Centers (NAMAC) seeks director to open and head new nat'l office. NAMAC is nonprofit org. founded in 1980 to increase public understanding & support for media arts, incl. film, video, audio & intermedia arts. Nat'l director will be person of vision & commitment, an experienced & dynamic organizer who understands the challenges & opportunities facing the field. Qualifications incl. solid organizing bkgd, familiarity w/media arts, excellent communications, fundraising & financial management skills; willingness to travel. For complete job description, write: NAMAC, 480 Potrero Ave., San Francisco, CA 94110. Deadline: Feb. 1.

**ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY**: 2 tenure-track positions open in undergrad. film/video production. Responsibilities incl. teaching professional specialties (prod., screenwriting, computer animation, history & aesthetics, etc.). Requirements: M.A. preferred. Ideal candidate has strong teaching & prod. bkgd. Salary & rank commensurate w/ qualifications. EEO. Deadline: Feb. 15. Send cover letter, resume to: Erik Timmerman, Film/video search committee, SPAS, Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, NY 14623-0887.

**SINKING CREEK FILM CELEBRATION** seeks managing dir. for film/video festival, education programs, promotion & development. Send resume, references & min. salary requirement by Jan. 25 to: Sinking Creek Film Celebration, 402 Sarrat Center, Vanderbilt Univ., Nashville, TN 37240.

**UNIV. OF SOUTH FLORIDA** seeks ass't prof., artist/filmmaker for 9 mo. tenure track position beg. Aug. 6, 1991. Requires MFA or equivalent, ability to teach full range of grad/undergrad. filmmaking courses. Also seeks ass't prof., tenure track for Artist-Computer/Electronic Images position beg. Aug. 6. MFA degree or equivalent required. Artist's primary tool or medium is computer in fine art application. Women, minorities, Vietnam vets, handicapped strongly encouraged to apply. Deadline: Feb. 26. Contact: Brad Nickels, Art Dept., Univ. of S. Florida, Tampa, FL 33620.

**VISITING ARTISTS PROGRAM**: N. Carolina Arts Council & N. Carolina Dept. of Community Colleges sponsor residencies at community & technical colleges. Visiting artists present workshops, lecture/demos, exhibitions, in-school activities, readings, concerts & prods. Self-development time set aside for artists to devote to own work. Residencies range from 9 mo. to one school yr, at about \$17-25,000 plus generous benefits pkg. Deadline: Jan. 15. Contact: Visiting Artist Program, Community Development Section, N. Carolina Arts Council, Dept. of Cultural Resources, Raleigh, NC 27601-2807.

**WRIGHT STATE UNIV.** film/video production dept. seeks ass't or associate professor, tenure-track, beg.



Sept. 1991, for full range of film prod. classes & to advise student filmmakers. Minimum qualifications incl. MFA, PhD, or equivalent professional exp.; broad knowledge of film/video production; interest in social & political dimensions of media & proven success teaching doc, narrative & experimental filmmaker. Preferred qualifications incl. ability to mentor students in experimental film & significant reputation as filmmaker. Deadline: Jan. 22. Send letter, resume & 3 refs to: Dr. William Lafferty, Theatre Arts Dept., Wright State University, Dayton, OH 45435. Women & minorities urged to apply.

## Publications

**THE ORIGINS OF PUBLIC ACCESS CABLE TV:** 1966-1972, the Oct. 1990 edition of Journalism Monographs, now avail. Price: \$5 w/airmail surcharge of \$3. Contact: Assn for Education in Journalism & Mass Communication, 1621 College St., Univ. of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208-0251; (803) 777-2005.

**FELIX:** A Journal of Media Arts & Communication to be published 3x/yr "calls on video artists to speak their minds & combat the ogres of conservatism." Subscription price: Individuals, \$15/yr; institutions, \$21/yr. Contact: Standby Program, Felix, Box 184, Prince St. Sta., New York, NY 10012; or editor Kathy High; (212) 219-0951, (718) 624-3896.

## Resources ■ Funds

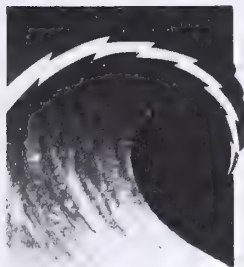
**CHECKERBOARD FOUNDATION** accepting appls for 1990-91 postproduction awards. 2 to 4 awards of \$5,000 to \$10,000 will be granted in spring 1991. Only New York State residents may apply. Deadline: March 20. For appls, contact: Checkerboard Foundation, c/o Media Alliance, 356 West 58th St., New York, NY 10019; (212) 560-2919.

**EXPERIMENTAL TV CENTER** Electronic Arts Grants Program offers presentation funds to nonprofit orgs in NYS to assist w/ exhibition of audio, video & related electronic art. Projects receiving funding from NYSCA ineligible. No deadline. Contact: Electronic Arts Grants, Experimental TV Center, 180 Front St., Owego, NY 13827; (607) 687-4341.

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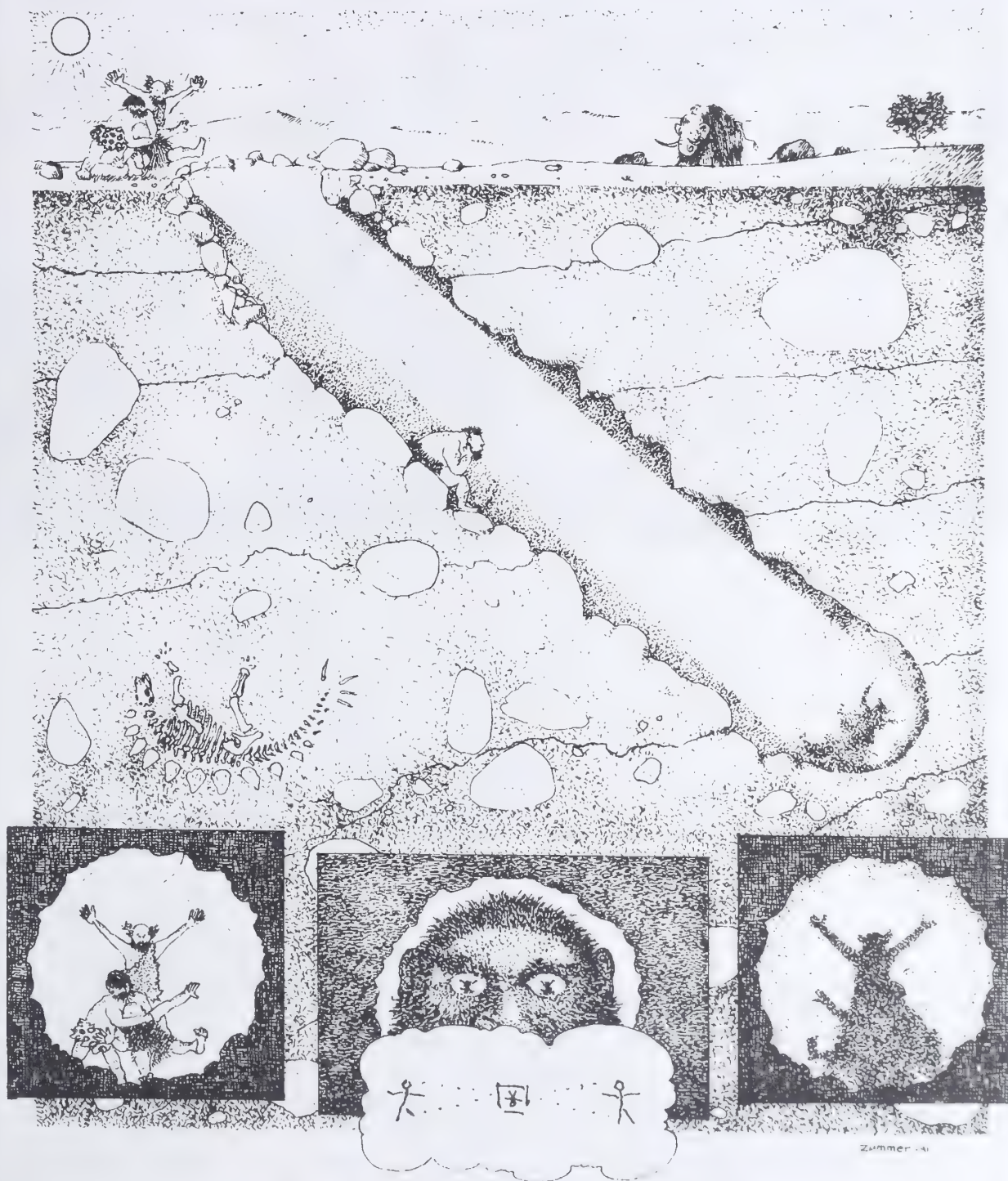


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## LUDDITES IN HOLLYWOOD?

To the editor:

Brian Winston, in his article "HDTV in Hollywood" [December 1990], argues that the film community is culturally biased against technical innovation. His point may be an interesting one, but factual inaccuracies render his arguments moot. In every case he mentions there seem to be perfectly good technical reasons for the choice of one process or technique over the other.

1. The upright moviola is still used by some feature editors not out of some "mysterium" of the editing craft, but because it is actually better suited to the quick viewing and reviewing of short pieces of film and thus more appropriate to the way some editors organize their feature cuts.

2. It is my understanding that optical sound triumphed over its competitors precisely because of its technical superiority. A magnetic system using steel wire was in fact developed in Britain and used on several films; it failed because its sound quality was inferior to that available optically and (I think) because the problem of maintaining sync proved too complex. When Kudelski finally developed a portable, high-quality magnetic tape recorder in the late fifties, it was adopted for use on films almost immediately.

3. Winston wonders why Kodachrome, available as an amateur format in the early thirties, was not adopted for professional use. The reason was not simply patents; Kodachrome is a high contrast reversal stock, and it proved to be very difficult to make acceptable prints from it. This was not a problem for the amateur, who viewed his or her original, but was obviously a fatal obstacle to professional production. The Eastman color stocks which became available in the early fifties were, of course, negative stocks, totally unrelated to Kodachrome.

4. Winston wonders why Hollywood remains stuck on the 35mm film width, when 16mm is "perfectly adequate for halls seating hundreds." This is laughable; large scale 16mm projection is frequently painfully bad. This is so not only because of reduced resolution, but because the wider projection lens 16mm requires necessarily entails a far less tolerant back focus adjustment, because of inferior sound, and because of limits on the amount of light which can be pumped through the smaller frame. Even given 16mm projection at its best, I don't think that any professional would deny that there is a very real difference in quality between it and 35mm theatrical projection. Winston's questioning of why the industry did not go to some intermediate format (Pathé's 28mm) also makes no sense; it is generally agreed that one of film's strengths vis à vis video is the existence of two simple standards which are used worldwide and which don't change every 10 years. And, in fact, Winston's thesis to the contrary, technical innovations within the 35mm format have at various times achieved wide and quick acceptance—anamorphic systems, Techniscope, Technovision, etc.

Winston's analysis of the flaws in current HDTV systems is interesting, and he may well be right that the system is doomed to failure. But Winston himself makes the case for the system's technical inferiority; why then should a supposed anti-innovation bias be responsible for its defeat?

The ways in which cultural and economic factors affect (or fail to affect) technical innovation is a fascinating subject; I hope *The Independent* will publish more

articles in this area, but I also hope that someone will check their accuracy first.

—Zachary Winestine  
New York, NY

Brian Winston replies:

Mr. Winestine makes four points which he says render my supposition that the film industry is technologically conservative "moot."

1. Winestine says I'm wrong about the "unfriendliness" of Moviolas. If I am, then he must be prepared to tackle Harry Mathias, Panavision's senior consultant, whose opinion, given at a SMPTE conference in 1984, I was repeating. Anyway, his refutation of Mathias' point is that Moviolas are "better." This is an example of what Winestine, in his first paragraph, describes as a "perfectly good technical reason for a choice." Well, that's what Winestine thinks. Mathias thinks otherwise. In either case, Winestine's point remains to be made in an objective and scientific way.

2. Winestine's "understanding" of the history of sound recording is deficient. I was not talking about wire (as he supposes) but tape—as I said but, sadly, did not quite communicate to Winestine. I apologize to him, but the format of a popular article does not permit footnotes. Let me now remedy that and also acknowledge the important work of William Lafferty in this area. Professor Lafferty's paper "The Blatnerphone: An Early Attempt to Introduce Magnetic Tape Recording into the Industry" can be found in the *Cinema Journal*, Summer 1983. It is to that I was referring.

The second point under this heading is also, I'm afraid, somewhat awry historically. Kudelski did not develop his tape machine in a specific form for film work until 1962—not, as Winestine "understands," in the late fifties (see *SMPTE Journal*, November 1962, p. 902). Further, the machine was not imported into Hollywood (which is what I was talking about) "immediately." It is a characteristic of "understanding" as opposed to knowledge that history becomes reduced to the progress of great (and I use the term advisedly) men. That's what Winestine is doing here. Kudelski, for all his considerable achievement, will not serve in such a "great man" role. I suggest that it might be as well to consult the *SMPTE Journal*, *Audio*, and the *Journal of the Audio Engineering Society* to correct this. Of particular significance is the piece I was quoting from when I mentioned the 64 lb. "lightweight" tape recorder: Loren Ryder's "Magnetic Sound Recording in the Motion Picture and Television Industries," published in the *SMPTE Journal*, July 1976. Again, I apologize to Winestine that the format of the article didn't allow me to give him this reference previously.

3. Winestine totally misreads what I said about Kodachrome. It was the patent armlock that Kalmus of Technicolor put on Eastman that prevented Kodak from offering a negative color stock on any gauge in the thirties. The point is not the distinction between negative and reversal, which Winestine erroneously thinks I do not understand; rather it is between modern dye-coupler stocks, whether negative or reversal, and the older technology represented by Technicolor. My point is that dye-coupler negative stocks could have been offered in the thirties and indeed were—by AGFA. (Again, the *SMPTE Journal* is an excellent source; for instance, Roderick Ryan's "Color in the Motion Picture Indus-

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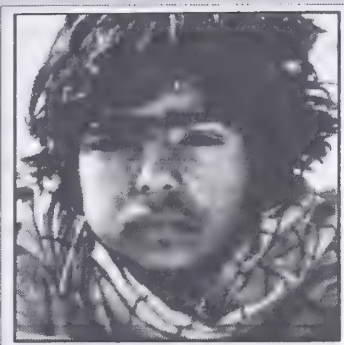
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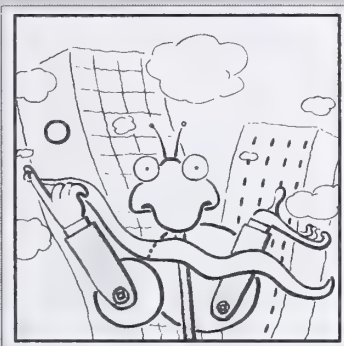




12



16



20

COVER: In this issue, Plato's Cave and other forerunners of cinema are given their due by artist T. Zumner. In addition, Karen Rosenberg describes the many pre-twentieth-century optical devices that are alive and well and being put to use by today's filmmakers in "Moving Picture Machines: Flip Books, Phenakistascopes, Zoetropes, and Other Optical Inventions." Finally, Debreh Gilbert highlights Bill Brand's contemporary zoetrope located in a Brooklyn subway tunnel in her article "Not Just Another Underground Film." Drawing by T. Zumner.

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## WHEEL OF MISFORTUNE

### Media Centers Suffer from NEA Reallocations

"My impression is that they funded the larger programs and left smaller programs to fend for themselves," says Dan Ladely of the Sheldon Film Theater in Lincoln, Nebraska. "The irony of the situation is that they decided to drop the smaller programs in geographic areas with low populations."

The National Endowment for the Arts has made the proverbial jump from the frying pan to the fire. In this case, the distance was about half a mile down Pennsylvania Avenue—from Capitol Hill, where the arts agency was threatened with extinction by members of Congress last year, to the NEA's offices in the Old Post Office building, where it now faces the task of implementing Congress' instructions, including a painful 10 percent cut from its program budget. Although the full impact of the reauthorization bill has yet to be felt, its effect on programs and policies is beginning to come into focus.

#### 10 Percent Fewer Program Dollars

The figures for fiscal year 1991 (which began October 1, 1990) present a disheartening picture for the arts agency. Although appropriations are up \$2.8-million, to \$174-million for the agency overall, there is a net loss in funds allocated to federal program grants amounting to \$12.5-million or 10 percent, according to NEA spokesman Josh Dare.

In the past, 20 percent of the NEA's budget was funneled to state arts agencies and regional arts organizations through the endowment's States Program, with the block grants parcelled out according to a formula based on population. But during last year's debate over the agency's reauthorization, conservative members of Congress persuaded a majority of their peers to increase the states' share to 35 percent. This shift will be phased in over three years, promising even greater losses in program funds every year through 1993. In 1991, the states' portion increased to 25 percent.

#### New Set-Aside Program

Above and beyond the 25 percent automatically allocated to the states, the NEA is now required by law to set aside an additional five percent of its program funds (approximately \$6.2-million) for state arts agencies, which will be allocated on a competitive basis. These funds are earmarked for "developing arts organizations" and projects that "stimulate the arts in rural and inner city areas, or in other areas that are underserved artistically." Qualified organizations may propose projects to their respective arts councils, who then must apply to the NEA by April 5, explains Dare. As of mid-January, the NEA had not yet issued formal guide-

lines, nor had arts councils settled on procedures or deadlines. Even once this fund is up and running, it is uncertain whether the media arts will recoup any dollars lost from reallocation. B. Ruby Rich, director of the Electronic Media and Film Program at the New York State Council on the Arts, remains skeptical, noting, "I tried twice to get funds from the States Program for special initiatives in rural media exhibition and have been turned down both times in a way that makes us feel there's no interest in that discipline."

#### Media Arts Budget Cuts

These losses add up to \$1.4-million or 10.6 percent fewer dollars than last year for the Media Arts Program and \$1.7-million less than their original FY91 budget, prior to reallocation. Relative to other NEA programs, the decrease is about average. Media Arts is left with a total of \$11.8-million to spend this fiscal year. The Media Arts category that took the greatest hit is Programming in the Arts, scaled back a whopping \$1.2-million. This translates to 17 percent fewer NEA dollars for such nationally broadcast series as *American Playhouse*, *Alive from Off Center*, *Live from Lincoln Center*, *Great Performances*, as well as some stand-alone programs.

The remaining half-million was shaved from other categories. The American Film Institute lost about six percent of their projected FY91 funding. Radio Projects was reduced by 11 percent. Special Projects was eliminated altogether. Intended to fund "special artistic opportunities," this category supported both ongoing projects, such as the State and Regional Media Arts Initiative, as well as individual festivals, publications, and films. Finally, the Film/Video Art categories lost almost six percent: National Services dropped 10 percent, Film/Video Production six percent, Media Arts Centers four percent, while Regional Fellowships gained 20 percent.

However, the outlook for two of these categories, Media Arts Centers and National Services, becomes particularly cloudy when the new Media Arts Development (MAD) Fund is taken into account. The MAD Fund was set up to support "small, emerging, and multicultural organizations," targeting groups that have never previously applied to the endowment or have received only sporadic funding (see "Mad Money: NEA Announced New Media Fund," January/February 1991). In FY90, before the change in the states' portion of the NEA budget was legislated, Media





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Arts Program head Brian O'Doherty obtained a special \$100,000 allocation from the agency's chair, John Frohnmayer. (This \$100,000 is not reflected in the FY91 budget figures.) This was designated start-up money for the new fund, administered by the National Alliance of Media Art Centers (NAMAC). O'Doherty also anticipated a \$150,000 increase in the program budget, some of which was to be funnelled to the MAD Fund. The \$50,000 NEA-supported Management Assistance Program, also administered by NAMAC, was folded into the fund. "Then we could get out the \$300,000 without hurting anybody. It's very important for people to understand that we collected and scraped and got funds to start this so that we could have two funds, to bring in more people and diversify the field," says O'Doherty, adding, "We did not foresee the new legislation."

Reallocation, however, brought about subsequent budget cutting. The MAD Fund's \$300,000 was not scaled back. But other grants made to organizations in the Media Arts Centers and National Services categories, announced in January, totalled \$262,000 less than last year. Many of the groups denied funding by national panels then applied for NAMAC grants. But many of these are larger, more established groups, which do not fit the profile originally described in the MAD Fund guidelines.

### Panels Zero Some Funding

Although the total NEA money flowing to media organizations through these various channels is \$80,000 more than last year, seeming to support O'Doherty's claim that Media Arts Centers has long been a preferred category in the program, many media center administrators are feeling a big chill. When the 1991 grants were announced, it became painfully apparent how much the absence of \$262,000 for established groups hurt.

Of the 67 organizations rejected, only six were first-time applicants. The rest included numerous media centers with laudable track records, including Scribe Video Center in Philadelphia; Cornell Cinema in Ithaca, New York; Upstate Films in Rheinbeck, New York; New American Makers in San Francisco; Artists Space in New York City; and the Center for Contemporary Arts in Santa Fe. Others also had long histories of NEA funding, such as 911 in Seattle; the Collective for Living Cinema in New York City; Berks Filmmakers in Reading, Pennsylvania; the Helena Film Society, in Helena, Montana; plus the only two Latino media arts centers that the NEA has consistently funded, Cine Acción in San Francisco and the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center in San Antonio.

"It was shocking when we saw just who was cut," says Ed Hugetz, who was a key player in the NAMAC board committee that worked with O'Doherty setting up the MAD Fund. Hugetz had just met with the MAD Fund panelists as they convened in San Francisco. Of the 162 applicants to the MAD Fund, 30 had applied to and been

rejected by the NEA. "Even though we all know we need new blood in the field, it couldn't happen at a worse time," Hugetz continues. "Personally we all were saying, 'How much is this thing costing us?'"

Although many other organizations were funded by the NEA at lower levels than in the past, average figures show a trend of larger grants for fewer organizations. In National Services, 34 grants totalling \$450,000 were awarded this year. The average was \$13,235, compared to \$11,442 for 1990, which produced 43 grants totalling \$492,000. In Media Arts Centers, the same trend applies. Excluding the \$200,000 dedicated to the MAD Fund, there were 49 grants in 1991, amounting to \$1,323,000. The average came to \$27,000, versus \$21,527 last year, when 72 grants were awarded, totalling \$1,550,000.

### Feeling the Impact

"My impression is that they funded the larger programs and left smaller programs to fend for themselves," says Dan Ladely of the Sheldon Film Theater in Lincoln, Nebraska. "The irony of the situation is that they decided to drop the smaller programs in geographic areas with low populations. It's the opposite of their mandate."

The Sheldon Film Theater is a case in point. The only venue in Nebraska for nonmainstream film and video, Sheldon has consistently received NEA funding since 1974 at levels ranging from \$10,000 to \$15,000. This year it received nothing. The reason was not because of any negative opinions about the organization, Ladely learned, but because of the \$1.7-million reallocation. "I was told the panelists took a more stringent view of what they would fund," Ladely notes, adding grimly, "Brian [O'Doherty] told me not to be optimistic about federal funding in the future."

A similar case is presented by the Helena Film Society in Montana—located, ironically, in the congressional district of Representative Pat Williams, who chaired the House subcommittee in charge of the NEA's reauthorization and was a key ally of arts advocates during the battle over the NEA. Like Sheldon, the Helena Film Society serves a state without any other art theaters or venues for independent media. "To do this kind of work here is heroic," says executive director Arnie Malina. "I was surprised we weren't reduced, say from \$8,000 [in FY90] to \$4,000, instead of \$8,000 to zero." The timing of the cut is particularly troublesome, since the media center just launched a \$1.6-million renovation. Included in the groundplan is a second, smaller theater for the expansion of their experimental film and video programming. Without NEA funding, which amounted to 14 percent of the film program budget, "We'll have fewer difficult films and fewer travelling filmmakers," says film programmer Les Benedict.

Panelists also zeroed the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center. The sole venue in San Antonio for alternative media, Guadalupe hosts the oldest and



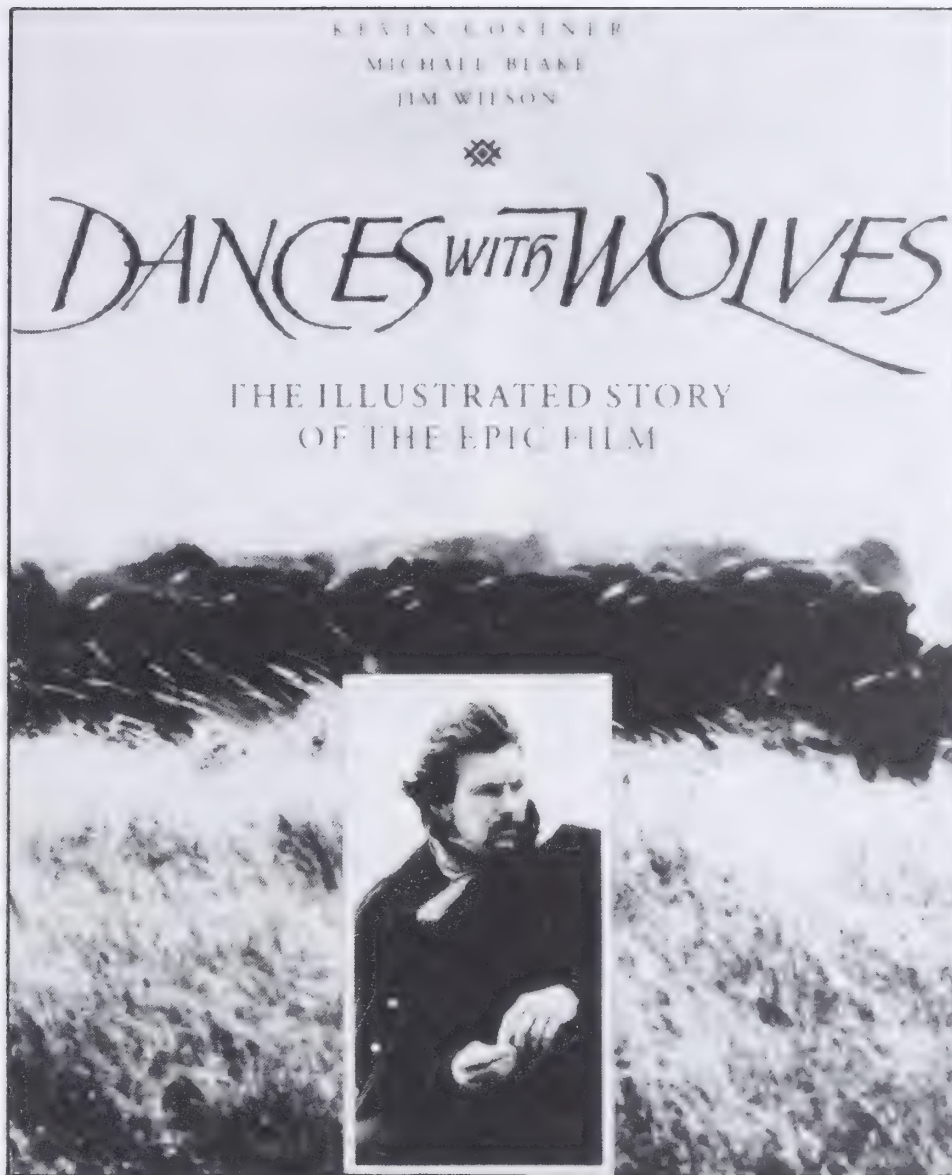
largest Latino film festival in this country. With a multiracial constituency and an aggressive outreach program geared toward young adults, senior citizens, and residents of neighboring housing projects, Guadalupe would seem a model arts organization for the 1990s. Over the past three years, they received incremental increases from the endowment. The organization is still waiting to learn precisely why they were rejected this year. Although theater manager Yvette Nieves-Cruz verbally requested written panel comments in early December, she hadn't received anything as of mid-January. Without these funds, says Nieves-Cruz, Guadalupe will not be able to further develop its outreach, nor curate a planned women's fiction film series, nor book anything without raising the funds from scratch. "What does the NEA mean when they want to see cultural diversity and multiculturalism? Are they saying that Museum of Modern Art will be the place that could present Mexican films and Third World films and African films? And for that, they will grow in their programming and be called multicultural. Yet the organizations that are working with these constituents are getting cut," protests Nieves-Cruz. "It's appropriation, in the end."

## The MAD Fund

According to O'Doherty, his instructions to NEA panelists were the same as always: "To be as tough as possible in terms of quality. The instructions are the guidelines." However, panelists were informed of the MAD Fund's imminent existence. Says panelist Claire Aguilar, programmer at the UCLA Film and Television Archive, "We were supposed to take this into consideration." Panelist Nancy Yasecko recalls, "There were a lot of questions raised about the MAD Fund, like, 'Do established organizations have access to the fund—especially those that aren't competitive here?' A lot was left to NAMAC to decide."

MAD Fund panelists, who met in January, debated these and other questions both during the panel sessions and after, at a five-hour meeting with O'Doherty. Says Hugetz, "People had a hard time deciding what belongs where. This particular panel felt there should be room for groups rejected by the NEA that would have no other place to go." While Hugetz does anticipate revisions in the fund's guidelines as a result of these discussions, the panel's recommendations for change must be cleared by the NAMAC board.

In terms of the applications received and funded, "The panel said they were delighted by the new people—and the quality," Hugetz recalls. "When it got down to 80 [finalists], it got tough." Among the 43 final grants—which will not be official until after the National Council for the Arts meeting on February 2—22 went to proposals rejected by the NEA, while 21 went to groups that had never previously applied to the endowment or had received very sporadic support. In addition, 11 grants were awarded in the Management Assistance category.



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## Recouping the Losses

But these and future groups rejected by the NEA will not necessarily recoup their losses through the MAD Fund, assuming they even get a grant (8 applicants did not). The largest sum the MAD Fund can award is \$10,000. This year the grant amounts averaged \$5,000. In comparison, last year the NEA Media Program awarded the Collective \$20,000, Cine Acción \$18,000, and Guadalupe \$15,000.

In addition to losing hard cash, many media center administrators feel they've lost the caché a federal grant provides when trying to raise additional funds. As Ladely explains, "An NEA grant lends our program a degree of credibility we wouldn't have otherwise." The Sheldon Film Theater still has a hard time convincing potential funders and private donors in Nebraska that this kind of work is worth supporting. "People don't think it's art. They think it's entertainment and should be self-supporting," Ladely states. "We've been turning opinion around on this recently," he notes, "but the loss of NEA support is a definite set-back."

For organizations planing to turn to their state arts council, a further handicap is the absence of separate film/video departments in most states. "The nice thing about Media Arts at the NEA is that we were competing against like," says Ladely. "Now, with the state, we'll be competing against the other arts. With this prejudice against film as an art form, it will be doubly difficult."

Finally, with so many states facing their own budgetary crises, there are now growing fears that the additional funds reallocated to the states may not reach artists of any kind. Rather, the additional funds may fall victim to deficit reduction measures. If, for instance, a state arts council is slated to receive \$90,000 more from the NEA, the state legislature could simply reduce appropriations for that council by \$90,000, using the funds for other programs and leaving the state arts council with zero net gain. Texas, which faces a \$4-billion shortfall, is considering these measures, as are Minnesota and other states, notes Hugetz, adding "The \$220,000 cut [in the Media Art Centers category] hurt. It's disastrous to our field. All that reallocation may be going nowhere."

PATRICIA THOMSON

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## SOUTH AFRICA NOW ALMOST AXED

The weekly news magazine *South Africa Now* has never had an easy time with public television. Since it was first broadcast by WNYC-New York in 1988, the program's producers, the New York-based Globalvision, have struggled to get carriage on other stations. The latest roadblock came last October, when two major PBS stations, KCET-TV in Los Angeles and WGBH-TV in Boston, announced they were dropping the series. Both stations, which had been airing the program for a year, cited doubts about its journalistic integrity.



When two major public television stations announced the cancellation of the weekly news program *South Africa Now*, anchored by Mweliso Mzizi and Fana Kekana, protests from anti-apartheid activists managed to keep the series on the air.

Courtesy Globalvision



It was only after strong protests from African American communities and anti-apartheid activists in those cities that the stations backed away from cancelling *South Africa Now*.

Critical to the turnaround at KCET was the pressure applied by the station's Community Advisory Board. This volunteer body—common to all public television stations—provides feedback from the community to station management. After listening to *South Africa Now* advocates speak at one of their regularly scheduled meetings, KCET's community board issued a statement demanding that KCET reinstate the series with a panel discussion and/or provide regular programming on South Africa. KCET returned the series to the air, but it also took the step of labeling this Emmy-winning series with a disclaimer, which says the program reflects the point of view of its producers and not the station.

"What happened in L.A. is a very unsanitary thing for independent filmmakers," said *South Africa Now*'s executive producer Danny Schechter in a recent telephone interview. "The purpose of this label is to warn the audience, 'Be careful of this program.' It is a standard that implies this is not legitimate journalism. Nobody has ever acknowledged that NBC, ABC, or CBS news has a point of view."

The dispute started after the watchdog group Committee on Media Integrity, led by neoconservative writer David Horowitz, waged a letter-writing campaign and threatened legal action against KCET for airing *South Africa Now*. Horowitz was quoted in the *New York Times* as saying, "It's hard-line Marxist propaganda posing as news." Then, on October 19, KCET senior vice president and station manager Stephen Kulczycki charged that *South Africa Now* was an unbalanced "advocacy program" with a bias toward the views of the African National Congress and decided not to renew its contract. Four days later, WGBH's director of broadcasting Dan Everett also announced his intention to cancel *South Africa Now* because he felt the "shows outlived their usefulness," adding, "the conventional media are cover-

ing the story in more depth now."

Not everyone would agree with Everett's assessment. "I fear an ominous trend afoot here," wrote Clarence Page in an op-ed in the *Chicago Tribune*. "President de Klerk's happy and soothing diplomacy may be accomplishing what his government's onerous state of emergency failed to do: silence important news and criticism of the South African government while the battle to end apartheid continues to rage...the bias excuse is bogus on several counts." And according to Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting, a media monitoring group based in New York City, network coverage is not necessarily picking up, as WGBH claimed. After a period of intensive reporting beginning with Nelson Mandela's release from prison in February and ending with his US tour in June, the three network evening news programs fell back to an average of only 1.3 broadcast minutes per week between July 1 and October 15, 1990. This seems to indicate that network news directors now consider apartheid a nonstory, ignoring the fact that Mandela and other black South Africans still cannot vote in their own country. And, based on the treatment of *South Africa Now*, similar sentiments may be creeping into public television's thinking.

VIVIAN HUANG

*Vivian Huang is a freelance film writer living in New York City.*

## BUCKEYE BUCKS: WEXNER CENTER AWARDS

Paper Tiger Television, the video collective which marks its tenth anniversary this year, is getting what may be the perfect gift for the occasion. It has been selected as one of three winners of the newly established residency awards at the Wexner Center for the Arts, located on the campus of Ohio State University in Columbus. The Paper Tiger collective will join choreographer Twyla Tharp and multidisciplinary artist Terry Allen as residents for the 1991-92 academic year.

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The Wexner Center Residency Awards are designed to "foster the creation or completion of new works and to encourage an artist to explore new directions," according to a statement issued by the museum. The awards are also intended to acknowledge accomplishment, rather than fund emerging artists. Awardees will each be given a \$15,000 commissioning fee, plus an additional production allotment of \$50,000 to \$85,000. Funding for the residencies is secured through a \$3-million grant from Leslie H. Wexner, president and chair of the retail clothing chain The Limited.

"The whole idea of these residencies is very flexible. It's a kind of no-strings-attached arrangement," says Bill Horrigan, curator of film/video at the Wexner. "The artists can do whatever they want to do, and each person or group [is a resident] for however long their project takes."

Though there may be some overlap, residencies will be awarded annually. The second selection will occur in November, coinciding with the Wexner Center's second anniversary. Generally, one award will be made in each of three categories: visual arts, media arts, and performing arts. There is no application procedure. Rather, the Wexner staff is fully responsible for nominating and selecting awardees, says Horrigan.

For the past 10 years, the New York-based Paper Tiger collective has produced *Paper Tiger Television*, a half-hour program cablecast on public access television that analyzes all forms of mass media. The collective was chosen not only in recognition of its past accomplishments, but also because of its collaborative approach. "What's interesting about Paper Tiger is that, compared with other people, they can do so much, collectively and cheaply," Horrigan points out.

Paper Tiger is still hammering out the specifics of its residency project. In one of the museum's galleries, the collective plans to set up a reading room, "a very informal, funky environment with couches, magazines, and TVs playing *Paper Tiger* tapes," says Horrigan. Also being considered is a publication commemorating both the collective's tenth anniversary and its Wexner project; purchase of satellite time through the cable access distributor Deep Dish Television to make *Paper Tiger* available nationally; and community workshops held at the Wexner Center, during which *Paper Tiger* programs and other video projects would be produced.

DeeDee Halleck, cofounder of the collective, believes it to be particularly appropriate for *Paper Tiger TV*, "the quintessential American show," to take up residency in "the heartland of America." Columbus has a strong background in public access programming, Halleck notes, and the Wexner residencies provide an opportunity to build on this community-based commitment. "Too often arts centers are too distant from their communities. Well, this is going to be a community kind of happening," says Halleck, adding, "The Wexner could be a center for media activity for the

country. The people there are very forward-looking."

CLARE O'SHEA

Clare O'Shea is a recent graduate of the Cinema Studies Department at New York University.

## VITO RUSSO: 1946-1990

Film historian and activist Vito Russo died of an AIDS-related disease on November 7 at the age of 44. Born and raised in New York City and educated as a film historian, Russo was a pioneer of the gay movement. He combined his political convictions with his passion for movies in his ground-breaking book *The Celluloid Closet*, a history and analysis of homosexual images in Hollywood cinema. In his book, his articles and essays, and his lectures, he used film as a vehicle to inspire, teach, raise consciousness, and kick ass.

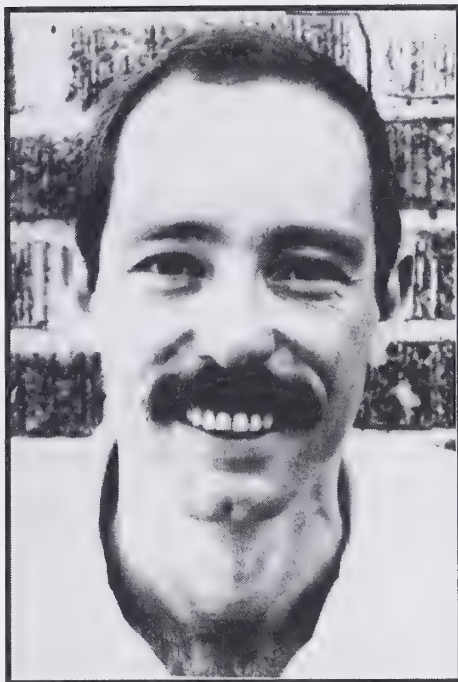
Vito was also my dear friend. We first met in 1976, when I was 20 years old. I'd recently migrated to San Francisco but was in New York for the summer doing research for the documentary *Word Is Out*. My job was to find young gay men and convince them to be interviewed for the film. Peter Adair, the mastermind behind the film, suggested I call Vito Russo. I did, and he invited me to a gathering where he introduced me to 50 of his closest friends. As with so many other gay people from all over the world who called upon Vito out of the blue, he was immediately there to help.

A couple of years later, when I was trying to get *The Times* of Harvey Milk off the ground, Vito offered to host my first fundraiser. We rented an old union hall in New York, and Vito showed hours of his favorite film clips—to 500 of his closest friends. He had a natural ability to create a feeling of community among people, no matter what the situation. It was as if Vito were hosting several hundred people in his living room, sharing precious gems—something he loved to do and did for friends and acquaintances so often. We raised about \$6,000 at the event, but more significantly, community support for the project was firmly established. It was that feeling of community—the seeds of which Vito planted—that supported Richard Schmiechen and me throughout the making of that film.

A pioneer and a radical, Vito was never a demagogue. His moral sights were clear, simple, and direct. He believed passionately in human liberation, and specifically he helped create the gay universe the world has come to know. In the late eighties Vito was a founding member of ACT-UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) and GLAAD (Gay and Lesbian Alliance for Anti-Defamation).

Vito will be remembered for his passion and dedication, his humor, his uncompromising anger, and his merciless wit. Jeffrey Friedman and I are proud to have preserved a glimmer of his





**Vito Russo**

Photo: Lee Snider

TV," June 1990]. A new office opened the first of this year in Hong Kong under the direction of Celia Chong, who formerly worked in the New York headquarters.



In an effort to attract foreign filmmakers to Berlin, as well as keep local film workers employed, the **Berlin Film Subsidy Commission** has set aside 21.5-million Deutsch marks (\$14-million) for film projects based in the city ["Spring Takes Time: Films from East Germany and Poland," October 1990]. The earmarked funds will be dispersed as grants in preproduction, specialized exhibition (e.g., festivals), and script development, as well as loans.



**Britain's Channel 4** has suffered a setback as a result of the changes in broadcast law, which now requires the channel to sell its own advertising ["Sequels," April 1990 and "European Broadcasting: New Rules, Old Game," March 1988]. Because of the slump in this year's ad sales, Channel 4 is cutting its program funds by seven percent. This is the first time the program budget has not increased beyond inflation (now running at 10 percent) since the channel started up in 1982. It remains to be seen how these cuts will affect local independent producers, who supply most of the channel's original programming. Acquired programs and shows cofinanced with other broadcasters will play a larger part in future programming. But at the same time the channel insists that a record proportion of its budget will go to commissions for independent work.



**David Ross** has been appointed the new director of the Whitney Museum of American Art. Ross has a lengthy track record in video art as a curator and critic. Prior to his most recent position as director of the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston, Ross was chief curator and deputy director at the Long Beach Museum of Art, chief curator and assistant director at the University Art Museum at Berkeley, and curator of video art at the Emerson Museum of Art. **Judith Trojan** has left her position as editor of *Sightlines* to assume responsibilities as the director of marketing and promotion for Cinema Guild. **Roberto Bedoya** has resigned as executive director of Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions in order to resume his activities as a poet and playwright.

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wonderful spirit in our film *Common Threads*. But his voice, his leadership, and his love were treasures that I, and the world, will sorely miss.

ROB EPSTEIN

*Rob Epstein's films include the Academy Award winning The Times of Harvey Milk and Common Threads: Stories from the Quilt. He is currently developing a television adaptation of The Celluloid Closet.*

## SEQUELS

Since merging last fall with NABET (National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians) Local 15, the **East Coast IATSE** (International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees) has been busy recruiting new members from film schools and low-budget productions—areas in which NABET previously thrived ["NABET No More," November 1990]. Adopting a new approach to films below the \$5-million mark, IA now will negotiate a flat deal covering all the IA locals and is taking a more flexible stance regarding deferred overtime payment and mixed union and nonunion crews. Despite IA's courtship of low-budget productions, however, work has been scarce for union members because of a strict boycott by the major film studios, who yanked their productions from Manhattan after the folding of NABET 15 and are seeking new concessions from IA. Negotiations between IA and the studios have been on-again, off-again, with questions about overtime remaining the chief sticking point.



**Public Television International**, the international sales distributor of PBS programs that opened its doors in February 1990, is expanding its presence in the Pacific basin ["Video Publishing via Public

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## INSIGHTS FROM IRAN

### Postrevolutionary Films on View

PERSHENG VAZIRI

During the past few years we have witnessed a resurgence of Iranian films at international festivals. At Locarno, Nantes, Rotterdam, Toronto, and elsewhere Iranian features have won prizes, prompting other festivals to hold retrospectives of related work. Some of these films have trickled into the United States, but their presence here has been less striking than in Europe. They are programmed by US festivals because of the critical acclaim they receive in Europe, which has always been culturally more aware of artistic endeavors in the so-called Third World, but also, one might suspect, because of the possibility of getting a glimpse of a country that has become associated

universities and cultural organizations with the help of Iran's film export institution, the Farabi Foundation. An ambitious and successful series of Iranian films made after the revolution of 1979, entitled a Decade of Iranian Cinema: 1980-1989, was exhibited at the Melnitz Theater at the University of California, Los Angeles' Film Archives in the spring of 1990. Two of Iran's most renowned filmmakers, Dariush Mehrjui and Abbas Kiarostamy, were present for screenings and answered questions from the audience. The idea for the UCLA series was initiated by film scholar and festival curator Hamid Naficy when he became aware of the many favorable reviews of recent Iranian films in European markets. After viewing some 40 films supplied by the Farabi Foundation, he chose 18 features and several shorts.

Los Angeles provided an ideal locale for this event, since a large number of Iranians moved there after the revolution. The festival proved extremely popular with members of the Iranian community, who are homesick and eager for any contacts with their home country. News of the festival circulated rapidly, fueled by controversy. A group of exiled Iranian filmmakers and actors staged a boycott protesting the involvement of the Iranian government, through the Farabi Foundation. Since the event was actually an independent endeavor organized and sponsored by the university, however, the boycott did not gain wide support. Indeed, all screenings sold out hours before show time. Unfortunately, many eager fans—including most non-Iranians who couldn't compete for seats with Iranians willing to stand in line all day to buy a ticket for a favorite film—were not able to see the films, prompting the university to promise a reprise in the future.

Fortunately, a more diverse audience will be able to see some of these films in other venues. A series of postrevolutionary Iranian films was curated by the Film Center at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago on behalf of the Farabi Foundation. It premiered in September 1990 at the American Film Institute in Washington, D.C., and toured to Minneapolis, Columbus, Berkeley, Philadelphia, Cambridge, Rochester, and Syracuse.

Like the products of any active film sector, the films that comprise these programs reflect a variety of styles and genres that make a comprehensive definition of contemporary Iranian cinema impossible. The only generalization possible is that, in accordance with revolutionary Islamic



One of Iran's most prominent filmmakers, is Amir Naderi, a leading figure in the Iranian New Wave movement of the seventies. His *Water, Wind, Dust* almost wordlessly tells the story of a boy's hardships after the village's source of water dries up.

Courtesy Film Center/School of the Art Institute of Chicago

with terrorism, fundamentalism, and fanaticism. Unfortunately, quite often the critical attention these films receive seems to focus more on the culture they represent than the work itself.

For instance, last year's New Directors/New Films series at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City featured Amir Naderi's stunning *Water, Wind, Dust*. In this case, the implication that Naderi is a "new director" or that this film was a new production was misleading. Naderi is one of Iran's most prominent filmmakers, a leading figure in the Iranian New Wave movement of the seventies. His 1975 *Tangsir* has been widely exhibited and received accolades worldwide. *The Runner*, completed after *Wind, Water, Dust*, garnered even greater recognition in Europe and was given limited exposure in the US.

Recently, however, a few retrospectives devoted to Iranian cinema have been organized by

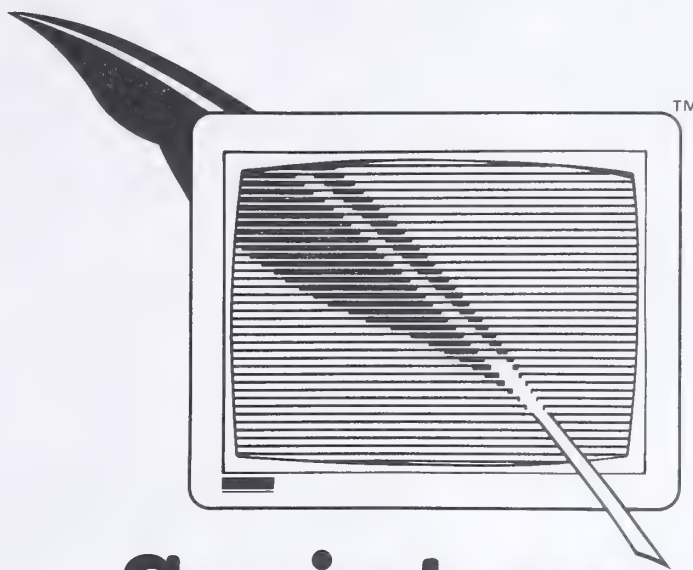


ideals, many of these works are concerned with social issues and are not centered on an individualistic perspective. In other respects, they range from documentary-style realism to poetic expressionism and theatrical hyperrealism.

In terms of its international success, Naderi's *Water, Wind, Dust* was the most prestigious film in the UCLA program. Produced in 1985, the film could not be seen in Iran until 1989, perhaps because Naderi emigrated to the west after its completion. However, upon release the film immediately met with laudatory reviews and awards. Set in the harsh desert of eastern Iran, *Water, Wind, Dust* depicts an actual catastrophe which occurred when a lake dried up in the arid region and people were forced to abandon their homes. The film's central character is a young boy who returns to his village, beset by disaster, to find and help his family. Words are sparsely used, and the dominant sound is that of relentless dry windstorms. Similarly, the film is practically monochromatic, tinted throughout by sandy beige. As his search for his family becomes more desperate, the boy's story of survival moves from stark realism to lyrical metaphors that suggest a life of struggle.

One of the strengths of Iranian cinema lies in children's films. An example in the UCLA series was *Where Is My Friend's Home?*, by Kiarostamy. Kiarostamy, who is known for his sensitive studies of the social problems of children, dissolves the border between documentary and fiction in films that use nonactors to tell stories from a child's point of view. In *Where Is My Friend's Home?* Kiarostamy relates the account of a schoolboy who is determined to help a friend but accidentally brings the friend's notebook home. Various insensitive adults inadvertently block his efforts to return the notebook; however, the tenacious young hero finds another way to help his friend. Kiarostamy shot this film in a small village in northern Iran, a place where the populace has not been exposed to television or movies, freeing the local, untrained actors from preconceived notions about performance. With effective use of close-ups and silent moments emphasizing poignant facial expressions, he communicates the children's inner feelings and dilemmas. Dialogue is so sparse that it is raised to the level of poetry.

Two other films in this series that are disparate in style and execution but nonetheless well within the tradition of Iranian cinema—individuals victimized by social malaise beyond their control treated in an expressionistic manner—are *Beyond the Fire*, by the newcomer Kianoush Ayyari, and *Maybe Some Other Time*, by veteran of Iranian theater and film Bahram Beyzaei. *Beyond the Fire* is set in the oil fields of southern Iran, where a torrid climate is accentuated by images of the fires burning in the oil refineries and the angry emotions that erupt between two feuding brothers. Set in prerevolutionary times, the brothers argue over the profits from the sale of their home to a refinery run by US oil companies. The western presence and the corrupting character of western financial

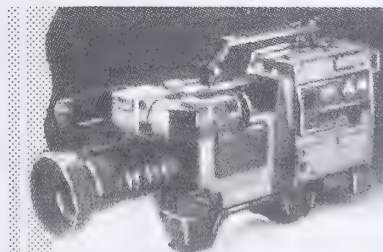


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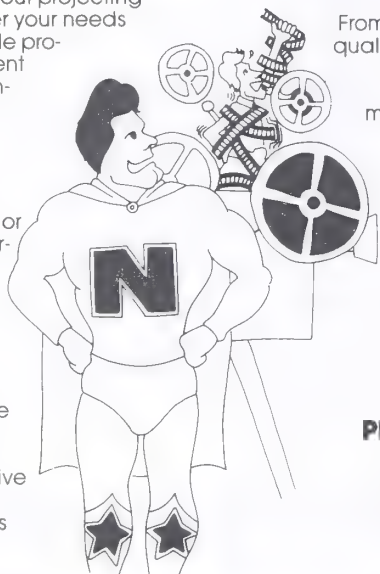


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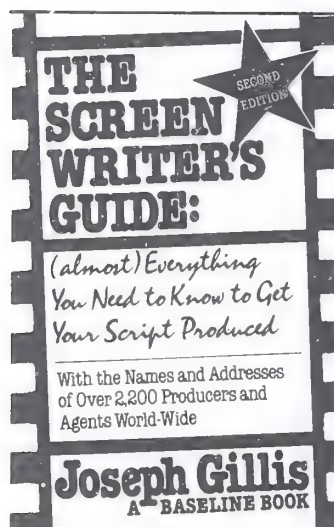
interests disturb the balance of the region, symbolized by such traditional characters as a mute milk vendor and her spunky younger brother. The stark, harsh beauty of the film is enhanced by fiery cinematography, combined with the repeated high-pitched, argumentative voices of the brothers and the fire roaring on the soundtrack. The various elements then effectively combine in an expressionist depiction of the difficulties specific to this region in prerevolutionary times.

For women, social malaise can be particularly acute, but treatment of this issue on film has been especially problematic in Islamic Iran. According to Islamic doctrine, the purity of women is directly linked to a healthy social order. Consequently, codes of dress and behavior greatly restrict the depiction of women on screen. For example, women are required to wear veils whenever shown, even when alone or with a spouse. Women are not allowed to be touched by a man, and at times men and women playing husbands and wives have been forced to marry for the duration of shooting. Despite this limitation, Beyzaii's *Maybe Some Other Time* features a female protagonist (played by the charismatic Susan Taslimi). This unusual character suffers from anxiety and stress, causing her husband to suspect that she is deceiving him. However, in his search for the truth, he discovers instead her tragic past.

Looking at the social ills of postrevolutionary Iran from a bold Islamic revolutionary perspective are the films of prolific and talented director Mohsen Makhmalbaf. An Islamic revolutionary and active militant during the prerevolutionary period, Makhmalbaf remains an ideological leader of the new Iranian cinema. This becomes evident in works like *Wedding of Blessed*, whose protagonist, the shell-shocked photographer Haji, experiences difficulty readjusting to life in Tehran after his experiences in the war with Iraq. His Islamic ideals contradict the widespread corruption he encounters in the metropolis, which he finds offensive in light of the sacrifices made by war martyrs who gave their lives to bring Islamic purity to the country. In the company of his active and vocal fiancé—a representative of the ideal new Islamic woman, at once deeply religious, virtuous, and socially vigilant—Haji embarks on the production of a photo essay about the problems facing the city. Out of the numerous resulting photographs—scenes of hunger, homelessness, and drug addiction

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**Mohsen Makhmalbaf, director of *The Peddler* (pictured) and *Wedding of Blessed*, remains an ideological leader of the new Iranian cinema.**

Courtesy Film Center/School of the Art Institute of Chicago

tion—his editor chooses to use a benign picture of a flower, demonstrating the lack of interest in addressing social problems. Again, the characterization assigned to the female lead in this film is striking. Despite her position as her fiancé's partner in the photo project, however, she enacts the reactionary role associated with women—attempting to convince him to compromise his idealism.

Three films from Mehrjui, a brilliant filmmaker who began his career in the seventies with his award-winning *The Cow*, were also included in the UCLA series. His most recent film, *Harmoun*, is perhaps the most thought-provoking and startling work to emerge from Islamic Iran. *Harmoun* tells the story of a young intellectual who holds a prosaic office job while simultaneously working on his philosophy dissertation. His already frantic life unravels when his wife announces that she wants to leave him. Influenced by his thesis on Kierkegaard, he sets about trying to understand the meaning of his life. Unlike Makhmalbaf's work and most other products of Iranian cinema that focus on social issues, *Harmoun* is premised on the individual. The unique approach appears to be successful, since the film won the first prize at Tehran's annual Fajr Film Festival and enjoyed immense popularity with the Iranian public.

The variety and strength of these Iranian films point to the healthy recent liberalization of culture that has been lacking in the past. Before the revolution, strict censorship prohibited themes that criticized the social and political environment in the Shah's Iran. Added to this was a national film industry motivated by quick profit, which produced light films with abundant sex and macho appeal and imported a large number of foreign films to satisfy more critical tastes. The New Wave movement in the seventies posed an unprecedented answer to the frivolity of Iranian cinema, representing broad interest in the search for Iranian identity. Due to the international praise these films received, they continued to be produced in the stifling times of the Shah. After the revolution, once the Islamic government took hold, films were censored in an extreme manner meant to discourage any western and non-Islamic influence. Only in the past five years have the stringent restrictions loosened, allowing established filmmakers like Mehrjui to experiment with the limits of censorship. The international critical praise this recent work has won, may allow this movement to develop and flourish in Iran today.

*Persheng Vaziri is a Boston-based filmmaker and film programmer.*

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**Media Network:** Clearinghouse for independent media on militarism; 121 Fulton St., New York, NY 10038; 212/619-3455

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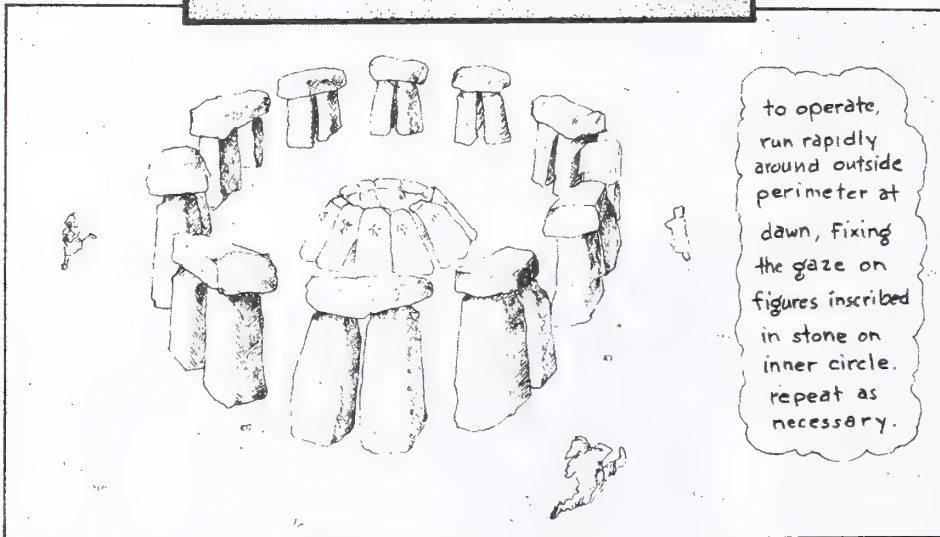
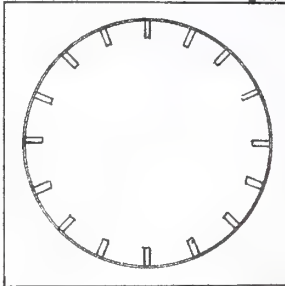
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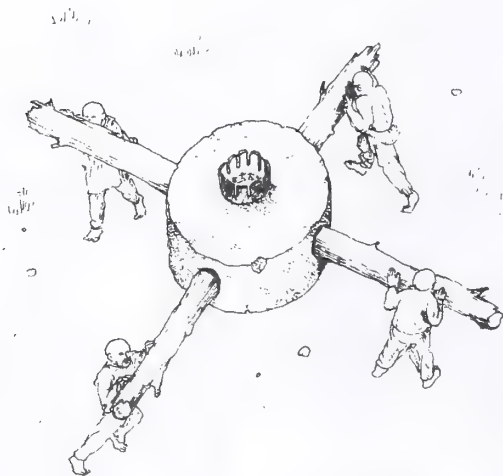
# The Pre-histories of Cinema

T. ZUMMER

## *Primitive Zoetrope, Salisbury Plain, England*



to operate,  
run rapidly  
around outside  
perimeter at  
dawn, Fixing  
the gaze on  
figures inscribed  
in stone on  
inner circle.  
repeat as  
necessary.



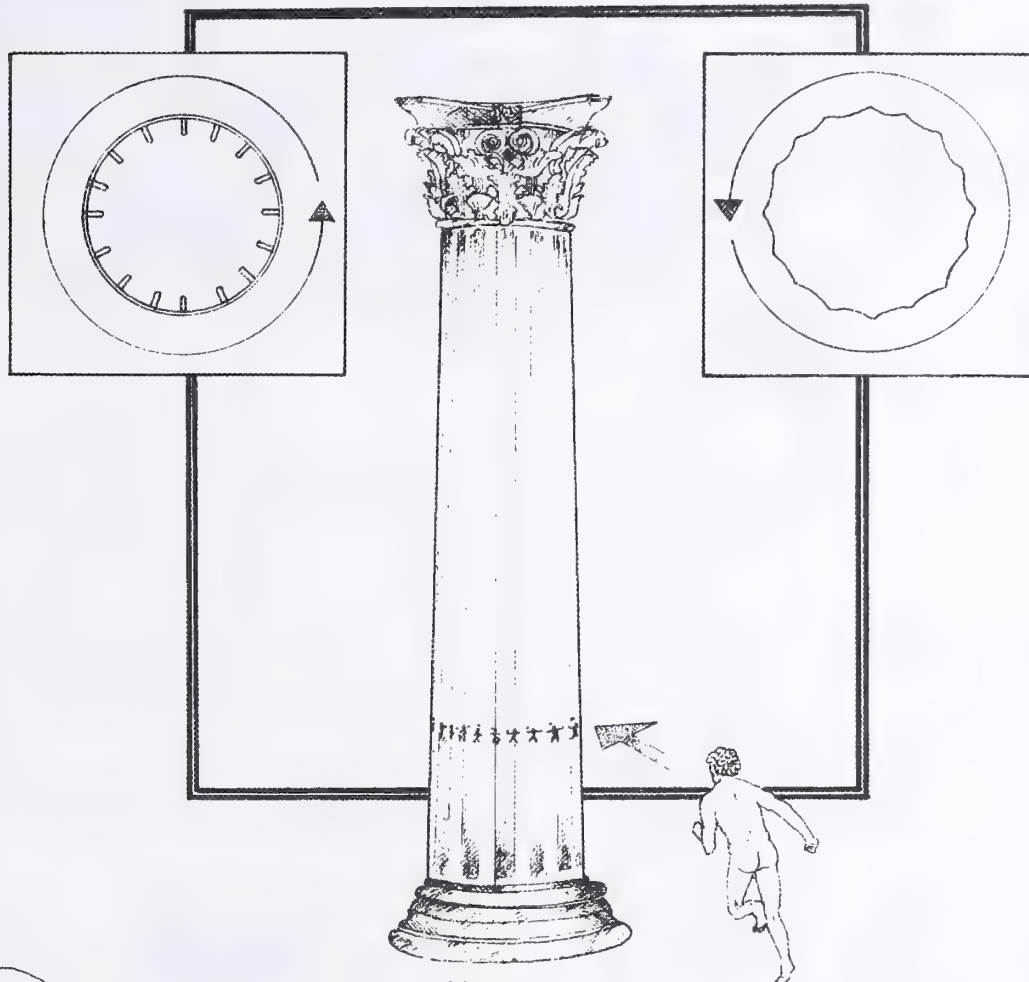
slow zoetrope, ancient Mongolia



Elizabethan Zoetrope-collar



# Classical Zoetrope, Athens 429 B.C.



to operate, run rapidly around base of column in a counter-clockwise direction, concentrating on Figures inscribed in stone at eye level.

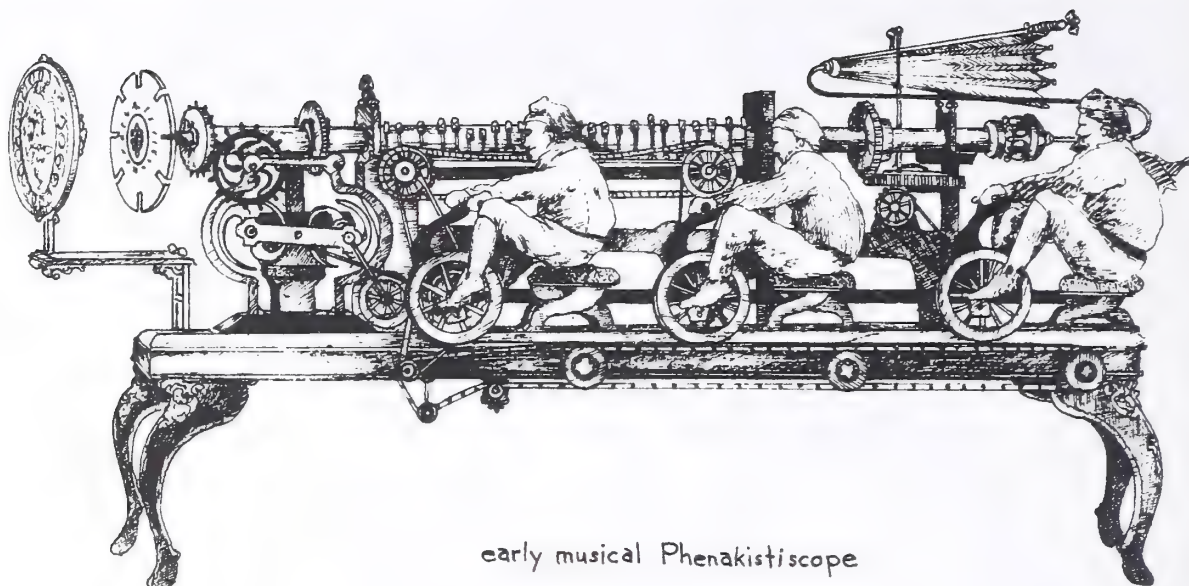
Simmer, 90



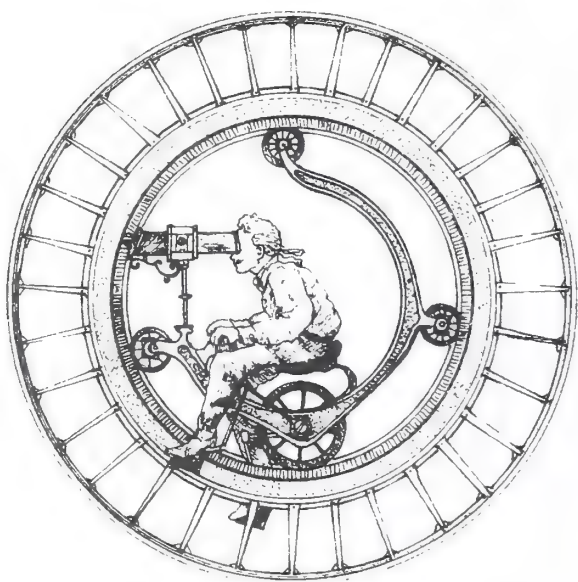
early log projector, *magie lumineuse du bois*

Gaul, 729

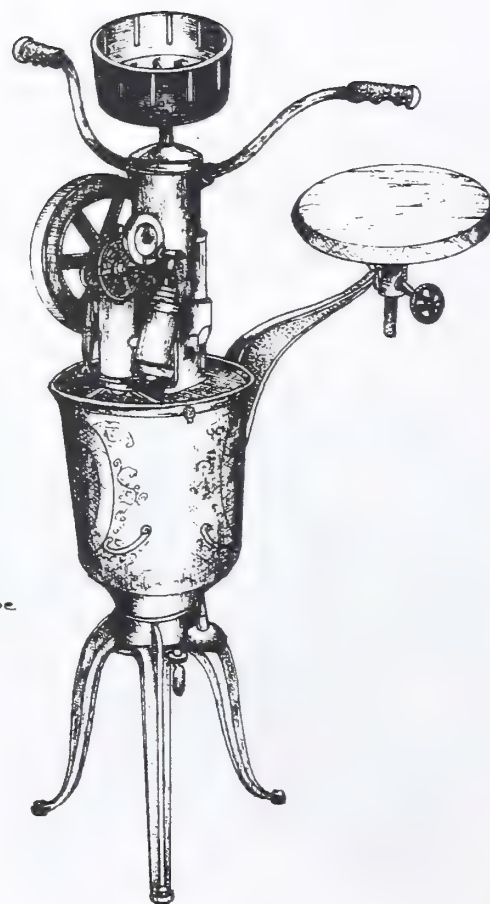




early musical Phenakistiscope

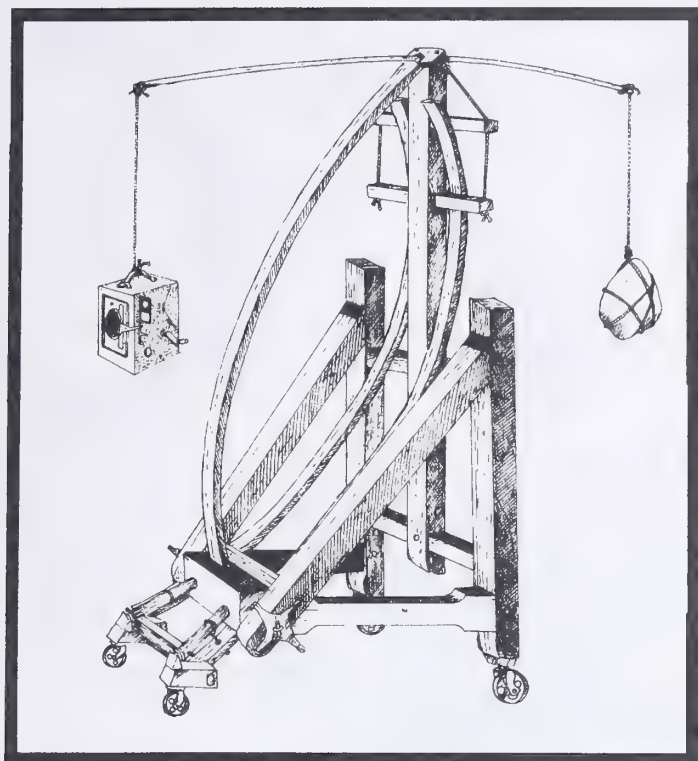


Mobile Vertical Mutascope  
18th Century

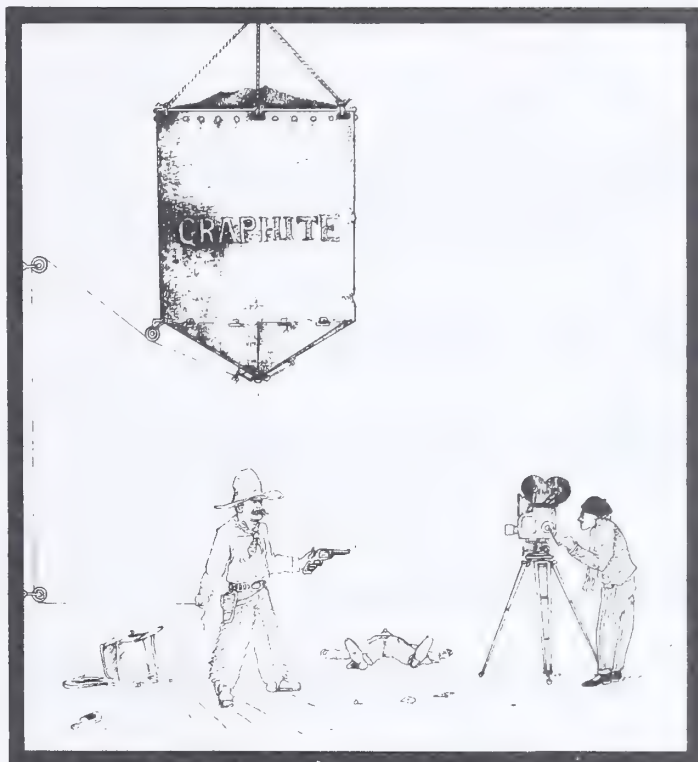


19th Century Steam-powered Zoetrope

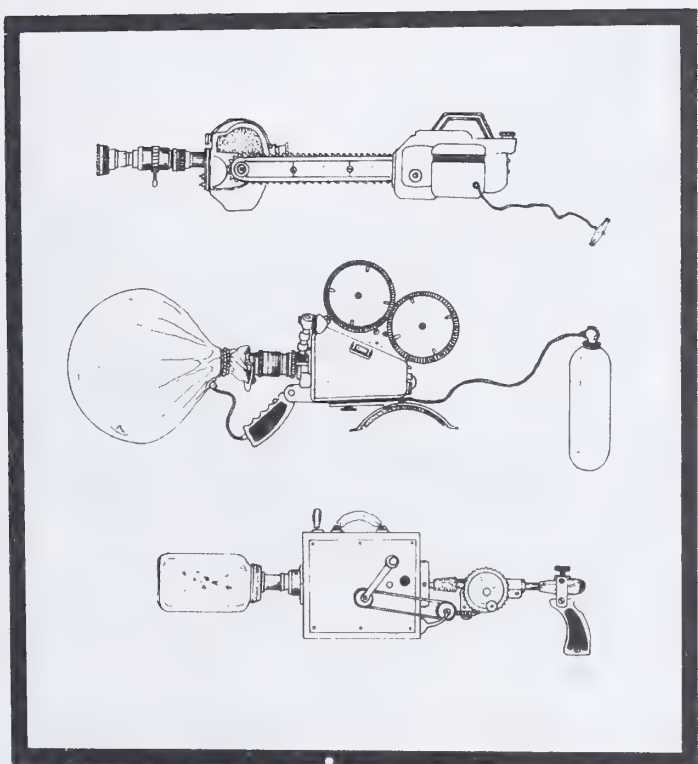




Early Camera - Boom



Early Fade to Black



Early Special Effects Cameras

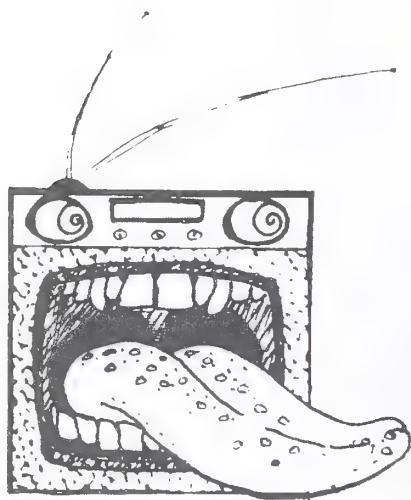


Application of Principles of Fluid Mechanics to Early Steady-Cam Technology



# Moving Picture Machines

## Flip Books, Phenakistascopes, Zoetropes, and Other Optical Inventions



Excerpt from *T.V. Dinner*, by Ruth Hayes  
(Seattle: Real Comet Press, 1981)

KAREN ROSENBERG

**A**LMOST ALL HISTORIES OF THE CINEMA PRESENT FLIP BOOKS AND OTHER optical devices based on the persistence of vision\* as forerunners of film, if they mention them at all. Optical apparatuses like the zoetrope, the mutascope, and other -opes are generally considered curious, antique exoticisms that have been superseded by "real" cinema. This despite the fact that artists continue to make flip books and optical devices. Perhaps one reason for this attitude is that many historians tend to see cinema as a branch of technology, where new inventions constitute a new stage of progress, rather than as an art form in which past forms, materials, and themes are available for reuse and reworking.

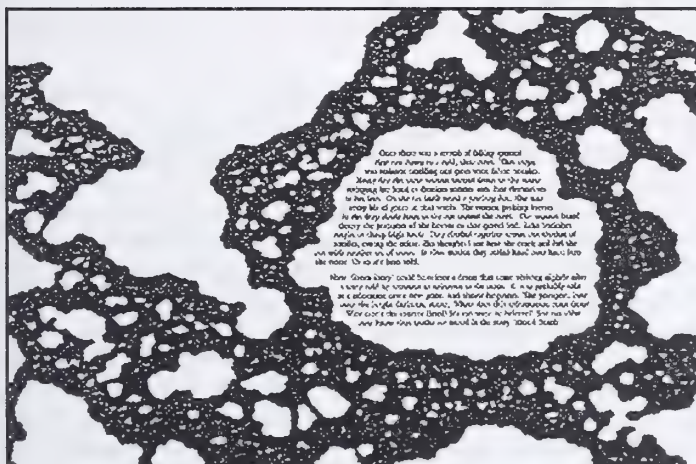
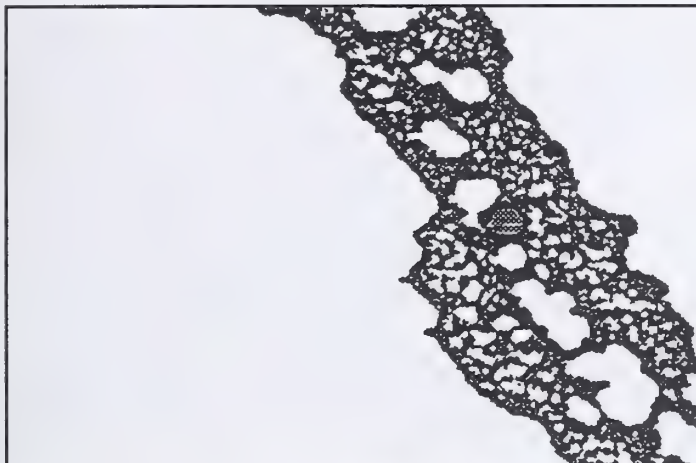
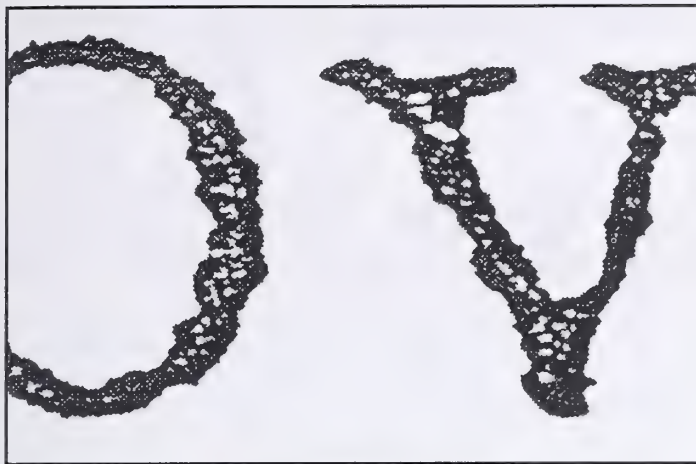
The same problem can be seen in the marketing of optical devices as precinema toys. Reproductions of old designs foster the notion that these are historical items, rather than a living branch of art. Even the term optical toys bespeaks a condescending attitude towards a type of animation as parlor entertainment. On the one hand, it is commendable that some children's museums and toy shops sell flip books and, occasionally, other devices based on the persistence of vision. But these are media capable of greater sophistication and artistry than may be immediately apparent from the glut of simple hit-the-ball sequences for sale. In Boston, I've seen flip books based on local landmarks, like Kevin Hubbard's *Kenmore at Night*, which features a neon Citgo sign in action, and David Stoff's flip books of Red Sox players in motion, shot by him in 16mm and reproduced on paper.

I admit that I came to this topic with the idea that animators make flip books at the beginning of their careers, to learn and perfect techniques and, later, to try out sequences in their films. Only slowly, after talking with animators, did I rethink this profilm bias. Like many truisms, my theory wasn't completely off-base. Lisa Crafts, a New York animator, told me that she worked on flip books in her late teens and early twenties while waiting for buses and during her coffee breaks at office temp jobs. White pads so cheap you can see the drawing underneath are more transportable than a light table and, therefore, good for experimenting at odd moments. Says Crafts, "I used them the way people use a Walkman now—to create your own space in an atmosphere foreign to you."

Many film courses start students off with flip books (less often, zoetropes) before handing them a camera. But there's also movement in the other direction (from films to optical devices) in the world of animation. Crafts made flip books from some of her films when invited to contribute to an animation art show. And Ruth Hayes of Seattle, Washington, told me that she began to make flip books as a response to the problem of distributing independent animation. Her two films were sitting on the shelf after they'd done the festival circuit, so she made flip books from the artwork from each. A show of art by animators at a Seattle gallery in 1979 provided her with a deadline for producing 50 copies of each book. In the next few years, she self-published flip books that weren't tied to any films, selling them at an artists' Christmas store.

\* When a rapid succession of still pictures passes before our eyes, our brain retains each image longer than it is actually seen. The persistence of images in the brain creates the illusion that movement is perceived—hence the term persistence of vision.





the far bank stood a yearling doe. She was  
ace in that world. The woman picking berries  
froze as the doe crossed the creek. The woman  
on of the hooves on that gravel bed. Like  
gh heels. They climbed together across the  
other. She thought: I can hear the creek at  
senses. In slow motion they rolled head over  
n told.

could have been a dream that came visiting  
someone as unknown as the moon. It was p

Excerpts from *Sheherezade*, by Janet Zweig and Holly  
Anderson (Long Island City, NY: Sheherezade, 1988)

Hayes now uses flip books as her main artistic medium, an unusual position that creates some difficulties. "In applying for grants to do this work," she wrote recently, "I've often been advised to categorize myself as a visual artist, not a 'media artist.' Since juries for visual arts grants usually make their preliminary cuts based on viewing applicants' slides, my flip books were first seen as two-dimensional photos. The juries literally were in the position of judging my books by their covers."

Hayes' works often have a philosophical point atypical for flip books. From the social criticism about the mass media in *TV Dinner* (a television devours a child) and in *The Flipbook of Revelations* (a TV evangelist turns into a symbol of nationalistic war) to the unabashed sensuality of *Hot Licks* and *Frogs in Heat*, these are decidedly not kiddie fare. The uncontrolled, animal nature of human sexuality is one of her major themes, present in *Animal Husbandry*, *Leash Law*, and *Roses Are Red, Violets Are Blue, My Cat's in Heat and I'm Thinking of You*. But Hayes is also distinguished by her use of texts in the flip books *Birthrite* and *Flip Book of the Dead*, which must be read as well as flipped. In flip books, Hayes points out, viewers can exercise control over the viewing process. "She or he can look at the book more than once. Sequences can be reread to catch meaning or imagery missed the first time." These are possibilities she often exploits in her works.

The idea of mixing words and flips has been tried by generations of schoolchildren on the margins of their textbooks, and some authors/animations have made ingenious use of this tradition. Max Born's explanation of modern physics called *The Restless Universe*, reprinted by Dover Publications, flips both front to back and the reverse. "Film No. VI," for example, is "Motion of the Electron in the Hydrogen Atom." Born's introductory note to the reader teaches the art of intelligent flipping, "First run through each 'film' quickly, then more slowly, and watch carefully exactly what happens."

Janet Zweig, who told me about Born's volume, has carried the interaction between text and word farther, so that one doesn't illustrate the other. In her *Sheherezade*, for instance, five stories within stories (by Holly Anderson) are arranged sequentially on the right-hand pages. Each tale begins as a small, illegible dark spot within a letter of the alphabet from the preceding section. As you flip the pages, the text becomes larger, until it outgrows the page and gives birth to the next story. Meanwhile, the left-hand pages also flip, showing the photographic image of a woman taking off her dress to reveal another dress underneath. Her last move is the same as her first, and this cycle, too, is repeated five times. The idea of infinite repetition gives the book its unity. "I used the flip book form because it suited the content," Zweig told me. Much larger and longer than a traditional flip book, *Sheherezade* can perhaps best be described as a piece of conceptual art. In fact, Zweig has produced artists' books since 1975 and came to flip books from that tradition rather than from animation.

The term artists' books can describe many contemporary flip books. I find it useful because it draws attention to the drawings and the conceptions of flip books, as well as to their collectibility, and downplays their status as kids' toys. It's expensive to buy a cel, not to mention a film, by a well-known animator, but flip books by such international names as Peter Foldès, Shamus Culhane, Yoji Kuri, and Zdenek Miler are available from the Cinémathèque Québécoise, the only remaining works of a 12-volume set published in 1967 for a World Retrospective of Animation Cinema. New York City animator George Griffin says that this series inspired him to do



# Not Just Another Underground Film

September marks the tenth anniversary of *Masstransiscope*, the large-scale animation created by filmmaker Bill Brand on the walls of the abandoned Myrtle Street BMT station at the juncture where the B, Q, and D trains ascend onto the Manhattan Bridge from the Brooklyn side. During these years, millions of Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) passengers have seen the 20-second movie which, however brief, comes complete with a reverse angle cut at the end.

Brand, who has made about 30 films which roll from the reel in the more or less expected manner, was inspired by boyhood experiences to produce an animation that reversed the process of movies. Riding on trains as a child always made him think of movies. "It's the same thought process," he says. But it wasn't until a quarter of a century later that the filmmaker/artist began to analyze how he could build a movie that stood still while the viewer rushed past.

The technology for *Masstransiscope* is simple, harkening back to the zoetrope, a turn-of-the-century device consisting of a cylinder lined with images and slits through which the viewer can see figures—juggling clowns, galloping horses, and the like—animated into movement when the cylinder spins. *Masstransiscope*, a giant, linear zoetrope, is composed of 228 painted panels, with a light bulb opposite each. The series of bulbs is embedded next to a wood frame with slits, located five feet from the images. This serves as the piece's shutter or animation barrier between images and



passengers. The subway piece is really a 300-foot-long box, six feet tall and five feet deep; the image panels are only 15 inches wide and three feet tall.

Brand remarks, "This is baking-soda-and-vinegar science. When I started the project, I imagined strobe lights that would be timed with the train. That turned out to be immensely expensive and complicated." He originally estimated that *Masstransiscope* would cost several thousand dollars and take two weeks to complete. Instead, the project took three years and \$60,000, which was raised by the piece's sponsor, Creative Time, a nonprofit group that seeks out unusual public spaces in New York City to display unique artworks. Almost three years passed during negotiations with all the departments of the MTA.

In the meantime, Brand was in his studio building a model that simulated the sightlines and speed of a moving subway train. One of the early questions he had to answer was how to get sufficient light through a very thin slit that would not only illuminate the image but penetrate train windows, which, at that time, were heavily smeared with graffiti. He eventually decided to paint the images on plastic scotch light material, which sends most of the light back to its source; this is the same highly retroreflective surface used for street signs and front projection screens. Brand's assistant, painter Theresa De Salvio, who followed his original drawings but added touches of her own, painted the images with a transparent silk screen ink that the filmmaker had discovered. The long-lasting ink, guaranteed for 10 years

his first flip book, which consisted of 200 pages held together with two large posts. But Griffin is not only a producer of independent animation in flip book form, like his satirical *Urban Renewal*, which combines "live action" and drawings. His company, Metropolis Graphics, also published "kinetic books" by independent animators. "Flip books by contemporary animation artists aren't comic-oriented or corny," he observes. The books by Paul Glabicki, Sara Petty, Kathy Rose, Roger Kukes, and Tony Eastman that are still available from the series illustrate Griffin's point: They also don't fall into the cute gag category.

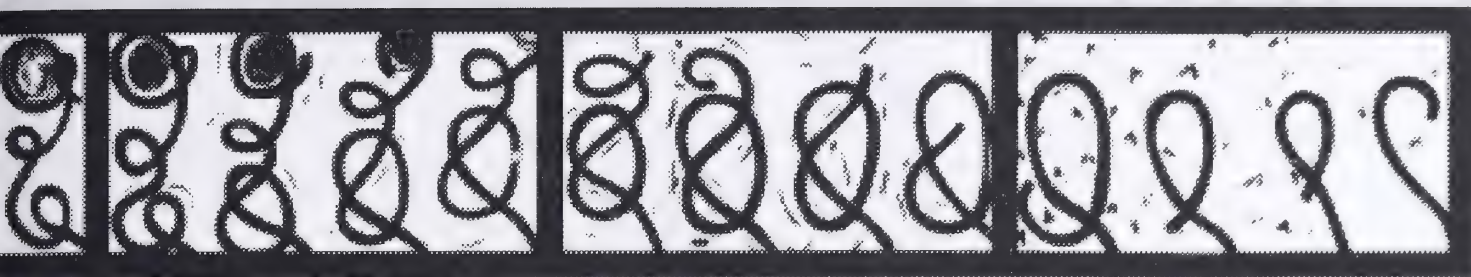
Often flip books by animation artists study changes in perspective. Such changes are dramatic in Patrick Jenkins' flip books *Play Ball!* and *In the Wink of an Eye*. Jenkins, who has been involved in experimental film, painting, and drawing in Toronto, received a grant from the university

where he was teaching to publish four flip books. "I try to make an interesting book and don't gear myself towards any market," he told me. "I thought I was making artists' books, but was pleased when they reached a wider audience."

Leta Stathacos, president of the Buffalo, New York, company called Art Objects Unlimited, told me that she represents Jenkins as a small press that produces "small artists' books in motion, with a flip book quality." She takes them to the museum section of the New York Gift Show and the juried trade show of the Museum Store Association. "We think about gaps in the marketplace," Stathacos says. The indeterminate place of flip books in the market is proven by the fact that they can be found—or not found, as the case may be—at stores for artists' books (like Printed Matter in lower Manhattan), at shops that handle quirky gifts (like Mythology on New York's Upper







on the side of a truck in the desert, was specifically developed for use with the reflecting material. *Masstranscope* uses fluorescent light bulbs to maximize the light hitting the images.

The piece was subjected to a series of tests to measure every aspect. Here again Brand deconstructed the process and found a seemingly backwards solution. "I made this crazy model that re-reverses the process, because I didn't want to build a little train that I had to ride," he says. Brand made a test object that worked like a tape recorder—a one-foot-high band that ran on rollers around the inside edge of a box. The band had slits that were proportional to the size he would be using in the actual piece. He installed a motor so that he could draw images and look through the slits, checking the effect at different speeds comparable to those traveled by subway trains.

The construction of *Masstranscope* presented some perplexing visual issues, according to Brand. He had noticed that zoetrope images seen through the slits look skinnier than the actual images. Those on the model piece looked wider. And the images grew in size the farther the viewer moved from them. "I had convinced all these people that I knew what I was doing, but I didn't know if I increased the scale whether something drastic would happen," he recalls.

He then sought the advice of a perceptual psychologist who provided a rational basis for what he was seeing. The psychologist explained two opposing ideas: the viewer actually assembles the image together in her or

**Detail from *Masstranscope*, a 20-second animation by filmmaker Bill Brand, which is installed on a subway tunnel wall like an unfurled zoetrope.**

Courtesy Creative Time

his brain; also, the image is, in a fashion, laid on the retina. The latter theory allowed Brand to derive a formula for calculating how large the images would appear at any given distance. The dimensions of the images could be calculated by measuring how far the slits are from the image in relationship to how far the eye is from the slits.

The images of *Masstranscope* are still as bright today as they were 10 years ago, although many of the fluorescent lights have been removed. For 20 seconds, MTA passengers travel along the movie wall watching lines wrapping around circles being squeezed into explosions which shoot toward the viewer. Down the track, these shapes soar through a tunnel and are transformed into a human balloon which merges with a mushroom and blasts off into a close-up that cuts back across all the recent past shapes.

DEBREH GILBERT

*Debreh Gilbert is a freelance writer who covers various cultural topics.*

West Side and Joie de Vivre in Cambridge, Massachusetts), at toy stores, at museum shops, and at bookstores. "Marketing flip books was the bane of my existence," remembers Griffin. "Getting the boxes out of your loft is a full-time occupation."

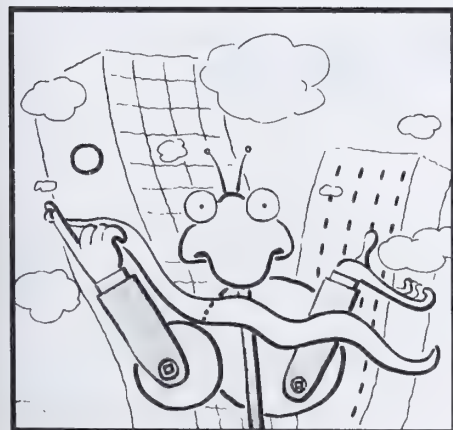
Optical devices—or toys—represent an even harder-to-place item in the market. Even the kaleidoscope—one of the most well known since it experienced a renaissance in the seventies—has to be searched out, because the craftspeople who produce them lack widespread distribution. Cozy Baker's self-published book *Through the Kaleidoscope... and Beyond* offers an illustrated guide to the makers and their restrained or baroque designs, which can help the would-be buyer find the desired type. And the kaleidoscope is a piece of cake to find compared to a zoetrope.

What's a zoetrope? That's the cylinder with vertical slots that spins on a

turntable. Through the slots the viewer sees a paper strip with a sequence of pictures on it. Because of the perceptual effect of persistence of vision, it seems as if the pictures are animated inside the cylinder when it spins. According to Roger Kukes' *The Zoetrope Book* (an easy-to-read self-published manual for making zoetropes and animated strips), "by the mid '70s, zoetropes were re-appearing in countless schools, at New Age markets and fairs, in swanky Manhattan art galleries, on college campuses, and in science museums from coast to coast."

By the time I looked in the early nineties, though, there were precious few contemporary zoetropes around. In England, I found a solar-driven zoetrope that can also be powered with electric light, made by the John Adams Trading Company, which manufactures other optical toys. The National Museum of Photography, Film, and Television in Bradford, West Yorkshire, puts out a paper zoetrope kit that is sold in various British museum shops. In the US, however, my search yielded few manufacturers. Van Cort Instruments of Northampton, Massachusetts, a kaleidoscope maker, produces one, as does Andy Voda of Optical Toys in Putney, Vermont. The problem both face is cutting the slots the proper width and evenly spaced so the moving image doesn't appear out of focus. Van Cort advertises that its "Zoetrope's slotted drum is meticulously wrapped with high grade leather" and spins "on a solid brass and mahogany pedestal" with a "felted base." Voda tends towards the handmade look. His zoetropes are handheld (his invention), with wooden drums that rotate on a lazy-susan.

But the major difference is probably in the imagery. Manufacturers tend to sell reproductions of nineteenth-century bands, thereby creating the impression that the zoetrope is in a state of arrested development. However, Voda makes strips that can be colored by hand (like his flip books *Celestial Surf* and *Bubblefly*, both subtitled *A Coloring Flipbook*), and he is energetically looking for new strip material. Not only does he copy antique designs,



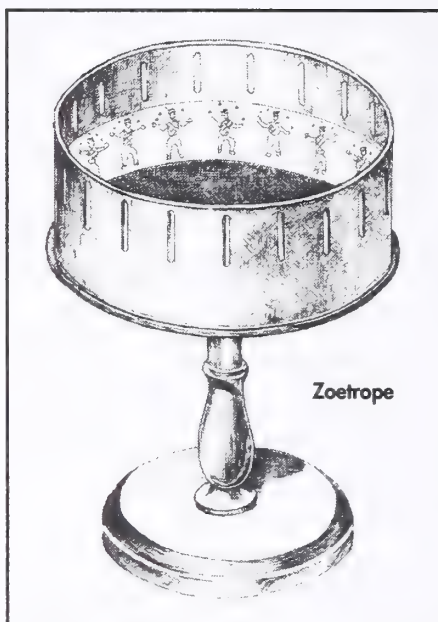
**Excerpts from *Urban Renewal*, by George Griffin (Seattle: Real Comet Press, 1989)**



he is talking with various museums about reproducing strips by Muybridge and others and to independent animators about gathering their zoetrope strips into a package.

Indeed, animators have long been attracted to the possibilities presented by the zoetrope. In 1979, Kukes put together the First (and the last) International Zoetrope Strip Making Competition in Portland, Oregon, in which Hayes participated. "I used the \$50 prize money to make a zoetrope, so I could see what my drawings looked like," she reports. Her flip books *TV Dinner* and *Gluttony* were once zoetrope strips, and her use of 12-page cycles in flip books may be influenced by the rhythm of the zoetrope. Hayes, like other animators, has also used zoetropes to teach animation. Kukes points out that they are especially good for schools that can't finance higher-tech equipment. In his book, he also notes how they can be used to create sophisticated, experimental animation.

Ken O'Connell of the art department of the University of Oregon, for example, made a zoetrope with progressively curved, rather than straight, slits, so that a strip with identical drawings would appear to move. He's also

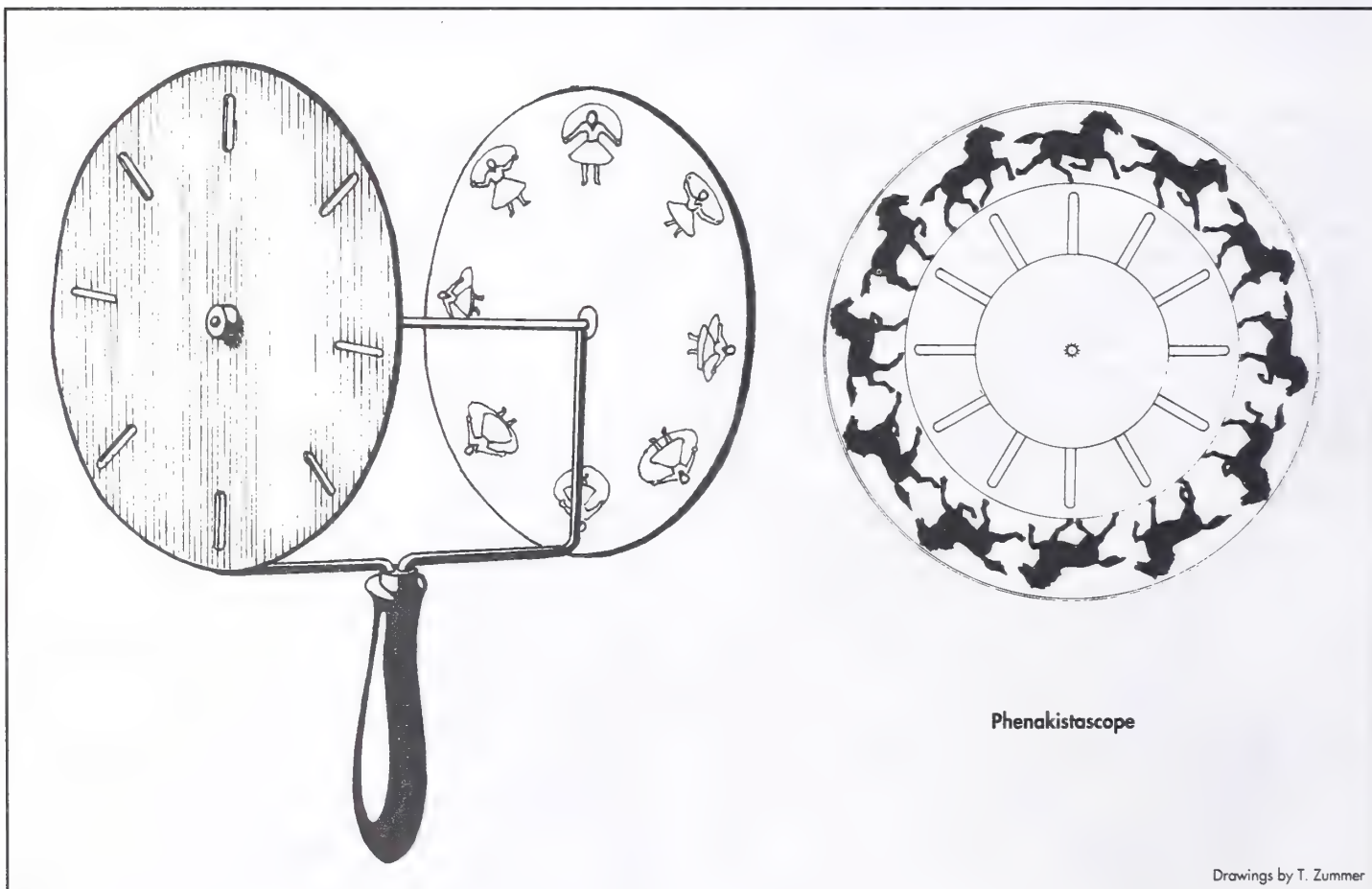


Zoetrope

produced one zoetrope with three-dimensional clay figures pinned or glued in various positions on the inside wall of the drum. O'Connell told me that he is planning to film the results of his experiments so they can be seen by more than one person at a time—another example of the interplay between optical devices and cinema.

And then there are optical devices that are even more obscure, like the thaumatrope, a disk with different pictures on each side, attached to two pieces of string: when the string is twirled and the

disk rotates, the images seem to merge to form one picture. For example, a bird and a cage becomes a bird in a cage. Voda makes one, and a French package called *Trompe l'Oeil où les Plaisirs de Jocko* is sold at Joie de Vivre. Then there's the phenakistoscope, a disk with slots near the circumference that spins vertically on a handle: when you look into a mirror through the slots, the drawings on the rotating disk appear to move in the mirror. Even the major books that describe these devices—like Martin Quigley's *Magic Shadows*, Henry Hopwood's *Living Pictures*, C.W. Ceram's *Archaeology of the Cinema*, and Bud Weitz's *Paper Movie Machines*—are



Phenakistoscope

Drawings by T. Zimmer



out of print. In Britain, John Adams Toys puts out an Optical Illusions Pad with these and other paper devices to cut out, and the National Museum of Photography, Film, and Television sells a phenakistoscope kit with reproductions of nineteenth-century disks. Voda, always energetic, produces two models of phenakistoscopes, one with paper disks (blank and replicas) that clip onto an eight-inch wooden disk, and the other with eight-inch cardboard disks (including contemporary designs). Here again, new designs are the sign of a living—and not merely historical—art form.

Only a few people have tried to resurrect the mutascope, a prefilm device reminiscent of a Rolodex file, which consists of cards (generally) mounted on a rotating cylinder and then viewed in motion. In fact, animator Robert Breer recalls that he looked at various Rolodex models when he built mutascopes, but eventually invented his own device: a dense spring coil which holds notched cards upright so that they radiate around a drum turned by a crank. The sequence produced is continuous, with no beginning or end. A 1958 model was three feet in diameter, in a metal enclosure, and he also made small ones in the sixties, all designed as sculptural items. Part of their appeal, he says, was the use of such a huge apparatus to deliver a small image. Distribution? "I gave one to John Cage, but he never picked it up," Breer remarked dryly.

It's probably appropriate to end an article on contemporary optical devices with Breer, who has been making flip books and films based on them since the fifties, mostly with abstract shapes. In 1988 he and William Wegman made a music video for Blue Monday, a British band recorded by Warner Brothers, where members of the group page through a heavy cardboard flip book; animated sequences from the book also appear. Breer then sent the book as a Christmas card, with a beveled edge so it was easier to flip. Music video, Christmas cards.... All this shows that devices based on persistence of vision are more than historical curiosities or classroom exercises. I now look at them not just for what they reveal about the precinematic past but to see how contemporary animators put images on paper into motion.

*Karen Rosenberg writes on film for publications in the US and Western Europe. Her recent articles have appeared in e.p.d. film in Germany and the Boston Globe.*

## **publishers and manufacturers**

*Kenmore at Night*, by Kevin Hubbard: 24 Cogswell Ave. #3, Cambridge, MA 02140, or Box 501, Cambridge, MA 02140; (617) 876-3143. \$4.95 plus \$1 postage and handling.

David Stoff: 327 Summer St., fl. 3, Boston, MA 02210; (617) 542-9834. Red Sox flip-books out of print, flip-books based on footage from the National Archives in preparation.

*Metamor-Flip*, by Peter Foldès; *Baccanal*, by Shamus Culhane; *The Room*, by Yoji Kuri; and *Infidélité*, by Zdenek Miler: Cinémathèque Québécoise, Musée du Cinéma, 335 Boul. de Maisonneuve E., Montréal, Québec, Canada H2X 1K1; (514) 842-9763. \$3 (Canadian) each, including postage.

*Wipes*, by Paul Glabicki; *Family of Four*, by Sara Petty; *Booklings*, by Kathy Rose; *Flowering*, by Roger Kukes; and *Peepin' and A-Hidin'*, by Tony Eastman: Metropolis Graphics, 28 E. 4th St., New York, NY 10003; (212) 677-0630. \$4 each plus \$1 postage for the first book and 50¢ for each additional book.

*Play Ball!*, *In the Wink of an Eye*, *A Fishy Tale*, and *The Magician's Hat*, by Patrick Jenkins: Patrick Jenkins Flipbooks, 125 Roxborough St. W., Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5R 1T9; (416) 964-7571. \$3.95 per book plus postage.

Leta Stathacos, president, Art Objects Unlimited, Inc., 7 Brittany Lane, Buffalo, NY 14222; (716) 883-8060.

*Through the Kaleidoscope... and Beyond*, by Cozy Baker: Beechcliff Books, 100 Severn Ave., #605, Annapolis, MD 21403; (301) 263-3580. \$15 (paper) and \$20 (cloth), plus postage.

*The Zoetrope Book*, by Roger Kukes: Classroom Kinetics, 3758 S.E. Taylor St., Portland, OR 97214; (503) 235-0933. \$17.45, including postage.

John Adams Trading Company, Ltd., 32 Milton Park, Milton, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RT, England, makes *Colour Spinners* for £3.79, *Sun-Powered Zoetrope* for £11.99, *All Done with Mirrors—Make Your Own Kaleidoscope and Periscope* for £4.99, and an Optical Illusions Pad for about £4.25.

National Museum of Photography, Film, and Television, Prince's View, Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD5 0TR; tel: (02) 74-727-488, puts out a zoetrope for £1.95, a phenakistoscope for £1.99, and a pocket kinetoscope (like a flip-book) for £1.95, all in kits made out of paper.

The zoetrope by Van Cort Instruments, Inc., 29 Industrial Drive E., Northampton, MA 01060; (413) 586-9800, sells for \$48 retail; a catalogue with their kaleidoscopes is available.

Andy Voda of Optical Toys, Box 23, Putney, VT 05346; (802) 387-5457, puts out zoetropes for \$35, plus \$3.50 postage, and thaumatropes at \$4, plus 50¢ postage. *Celestial Surf* and *Bubblefly* are \$3 each plus 25¢ postage. Both models of the phenakistoscope cost \$15 each plus \$2 postage for the first and 50¢ for each additional ordered. Additional disks are available in packages for \$5, plus 50¢ postage.

Learning Materials Workshop, Inc., 58 Henry St., Burlington, VT; (802) 862-8399, makes the *Peace Pop Top* for \$9.80, the *Wild Optics* top for \$9.80, and the *Toptical* top for \$11.80, all plus \$3.65 for shipping.



Excerpt from *T.V. Dinner*, by Ruth Hayes  
(Seattle: Real Comet Press, 1981)



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This month's festivals have been compiled by Kathryn Bowser, director of the FIVF Festival Bureau. Listings do not constitute an endorsement. Since some details change faster than we do, we recommend that you contact the festival for further information before sending prints or tapes. In order to improve our reliability and make this column more beneficial to independents, we encourage all film- and videomakers to contact the FIVF Festival Bureau with their personal festival experiences, positive and negative.

### Domestic

**CHARLOTTE FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL**, May 6-12, NC. Independent films & videos from throughout US invited to participate in competitive fest awarding \$3000 in prize money. Features & shorts accepted; cats are doc, narrative, experimental & animated. All selected entries will be awarded. Screening sites incl. Mint Museum of Art, Spirit Sq. Ctr for the Arts, Afro-American Council Ctr, Manor Theatre. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Mar. 18. Contact: Robert West, Mint Museum of Art, 2730 Randolph Rd, Charlotte, NC 28207; (704) 337-2000.

**JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL**, July, CA. Establ. in 1981, noncompetitive fest accepts contemporary films w/ Jewish subject matter; filmmaker need not be Jewish. All genres accepted. No entry fee. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette. Deadline: Apr. 15. Contact: Deborah Kaufman/Janis Plotkin, Jewish Film Fest, 2600 10th St., Berkeley, CA 94710; (415) 548-0556; fax: (415) 548-0536.

**MOUNTAINFILM**, May 24-27, CO. Competitive fest for works on mountain sports & environment. All genres. Awards: Best Mountain Spirit Films, Best Mountaineering Film, Best Technical Climbing Film, Best Mountain Sports Film, Special Jury Award, Grand Prize (Best of Fest). No entry fee. Formats: 35mm, 16mm (preferred); 3/4", 1/2", Beta. Deadline: Apr. 30. Contact: Jim Bedford, Mountainfilm, Box 1088, Telluride, CO 81435; (303) 728-4123; fax: (303) 728-6933.

**NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL MEDIA MARKET**, May 16-18, CA. Over 300 new undistributed film, video & interactive videodisc titles on educational, cultural & special interest topics represented at this market held during Nat'l Educational Film & Video Fest. All lengths accepted. Entry fee: \$15 for productions entered in fest competition; \$50 all others. Deadline: Apr. 7. Contact: National Educational Film & Video Festival, 655 Thirteenth St., Oakland, CA 94612; (415) 465-6885.

**NEW YORK INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF LESBIAN AND GAY FILM (THE NEW FESTIVAL)**, June 7-

24, NY. Showcase for all genres of films & videos by, for, or about gay men & lesbians, incl. dramatic features & shorts, docs & experimental works. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2" (super 8 only if transferred to tape). Submit preview entries on 1/2" or 3/4" along w/ SASE or \$5 shipping & handling fee. Deadline: Mar. 31. Contact: New Festival, 568 Broadway, Suite 1104, New York, NY 10012; (212) 966-5656.

**PHILADELPHIA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (PHILAFILM)**, July 24-29, PA. Competitive fest programming 75-100 films & videos. Cats: feature, short, animation, experimental, super 8, music video. Program held at Federal Reserve Bank Auditorium. Sponsored by Int'l Producers Assoc. Entry fee: \$20-100. Format: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", super 8; preview on 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Apr. 15. Contact: Varrell Henderson/Larry Smallwood, Philadelphia Int'l Film Festival, 121 N. Broad St., #618, Philadelphia, PA 19107; (215) 977-2831; fax: (215) 581-4515.

**SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL LESBIAN & GAY FILM FESTIVAL**, June 21-30, CA. Now in 15th yr, competitive fest is 1 of world's largest programs of feature, doc & short films & videos by & about lesbians & gay men. Held in conjunction w/ annual Lesbian/Gay Freedom Celebration. Sponsored by Frameline, nonprofit media arts org. which develops & promotes production & exhibition of lesbian & gay film/video. Deadline: Mar. 15. Contact: Michael Lumpkin, Frameline, Box 14792, San Francisco, CA 94114; (415) 861-5245; fax: (415) 861-1404.

**SINKING CREEK FILM CELEBRATION**, June 8-15, TN. Leading Southern showcase & competition for ind., noncommercial & student films & videos of all lengths, now in 22nd yr. \$10,000 in cash awards; special awards incl. Hubley Animation Award, 2 \$500 awards for features of special merit, 2 Asheville Cinematheque Awards of \$10 ea. for excellence in doc & experimental works. Cats: young film/videomaker (to age 18); college film/videomaker (undergrad); ind. film/videomaker; 2 purchase awards from TN Arts Commission. Held at Vanderbilt Univ. Entry fees \$15-75, based on length. Deadline: Apr. 22. Contact: Mary Jane Coleman, Sinking Creek Film Celebration, 1250 Shiloh Rd., Greeneville, TN 37743; (615) 638-6524.

**SLICE OF LIFE FILM FESTIVAL**, July 12-13, PA. 9th annual fest held in conj. w/ Central PA Festival of the Arts. Open to observational & doc films & videos which depict "special moments of everyday life." Cash awards, prizes, invitations to attend public screenings, reception & discussion. Narrative works & work over 30 min. not accepted. Entry fee: \$25. Formats: 16mm, 3/4". Deadline: Apr. 1. Contact: Lorna Rasmussen, Slice of Life Film & Video Showcase, c/o Doc Resource Ctr., 106 Boalsburg Rd., Box 909, Lemont, PA 16851; (814) 234-7886.

**STUDENT ACADEMY AWARDS**, June, CA. Annual competition, now in 18th yr, for films by college & univ. students, completed after Apr. 1, 1990. Works judged by Academy members (same as decide Oscars). Students must first enter 1 of 7 regional competitions. Winners voted on by Academy membership & flown to LA for week of activities, incl. meetings w/ industry pros, gala dinners, awards reception & presentation. Deadline: Apr. 1. Contact: Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, Attn: Student Academy Awards, 8949 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills, CA 90211; (213) 247-3000.

**SUFFOLK COUNTY FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL**, June, NY. Cats: features, arts & entertainment (theatrical films, music video, experimental film/video art, animation, performing arts); sales & marketing (ads,



PR), doc & education; student. Awards: \$7,000 in cash, scholarships, equipment, incl. Best of Fest Award of \$1000, WLIW Channel 21 award of \$500, Cablevision Systems Corp. Award & 1st place awards of \$250 & plaque in each cat. Entries also considered for paid bdest on Channel 21 Nov.-Apr. series *Off-Hollywood*. Entry fee: \$50-75 professional, depending on length; \$35 student. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, super 8, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: May 1. Contact: Chris Cook, Suffolk County Film & Video Festival, Dennison Bldg., 11th fl., Veterans Memorial Highway, Hauppauge, NY 11788; (516) 360-4800; fax: (516) 360-4888.

**WORKS BY WOMEN FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL**, October, NY. Held since 1977, fest features ind. films & videos made by women, w/ directors invited to speak w/ productions. Format: 16mm, 3/4". Deadline: Apr. 30. Contact: Works by Women, Barnard College Media Services, 3009 Broadway, New York, NY 10027-6598; (212) 854-2418.

## Foreign

**ANNECY ANIMATED FILM FESTIVAL**, June 1-6, France. Over 3,000 participants attend this major event; over 1,000 films from 60 countries expected. Programming committees look at fiction films (shorts & features) & commissioned films/TV films (educational, company, commercials, credits, trailers, animated sequences, TV series). Competition section: 5 short fiction programs, 5 commissioned film/TV film programs, 5 feature film programs. Panorama section: 5 short fiction programs. Retros, tributes, exhibitions, colloquia & seminars planned. Awards: Annecy 91 Grand Animated Film Prize, 12 other prizes according to cat; Fipresci Prize, ASIFA Prize. Related animated film market held. Deadline: Mar. 9. Contact: Festival Int'l du Cinema d'Animation, B.P. 399, 74013 Annecy, Haute-Savoie, France; tel: 50 57 41 72; fax: 50 67 81 95.

**AUCKLAND FILM FESTIVAL**, July 12-27, New Zealand. Held in conj. w/ Wellington Film Festival & sponsored by NZ Federation of Film Societies, fest now in 23rd yr. Accepts features, shorts, docs, many of which are selected for Wellington fest. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: Apr. 30. Contact: Bill Gosden, Auckland Film Festival, Box 9544, Te Aro, Wellington, New Zealand; tel: 644 850-162; fax: 644 801-7304.

**CAMBRIDGE FILM FESTIVAL**, July, England. Noncompetitive fest presenting new features, docs, shorts, archive reissues & retros. Format: 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: Apr. 30. Contact: Tony Jones, Cambridge Film Festival, 8 Market Passage, Cambridge, England; tel: 462666; fax: 462555.

**FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL DU FILM DE GRAND REPORTAGE DE LAGNY-SUR-MARNE**, May 28-June 2, France. FIVF will work w/ new French fest to collect and arrange prescreenings of eligible films & videos. Competitive fest "dedicated to the glory of audiovisual communication." Hosted by town of Lagny-sur-Marne, in east suburbs of Paris, fest will program films, videos & TV productions providing communication links between journalist/reporter/producer & public; also, works that cover major int'l events. Awards: Clou d'Or (1st prize) awarded in 2 cats: magazine & doc. 4 add'l prizes given to medium & feature-length films, TV production, ind. production; add'l prizes for artistic effort incl. equipment, cash, film, airline tickets. Length of work: 13-60 min. Completion dates: after Jan 1,

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**HAMBURG LESBIAN AND GAY FILM FESTIVAL**, June 21-29, Germany. Entries must deal w/homosexuality & be under 15 min., completed in last 2 yrs. Held at Metropolis Kinop & Cafe Tuc-Tuc. Formats: 16mm, super 8, video 8, 1/2". Deadline: Mar. 15. Contact: Lesbisch-Schwule Filmtage Hamburg, c/o Dirk Hauska, Zeughausstr. 42, 2000 Hamburg 11, Germany; (040) 3194025.

**MIDNIGHT SUN FILM FESTIVAL**, June 12-16, Finland. Held in Sodankylä, Lapland, 120 km N. of Arctic Circle, informal, noncompetitive fest, estab. 1986, shows both retros of prominent filmmakers who attend as honorary guests & selection of new narrative & doc features. No entry fee. Deadline: Apr. 30. Contact: Midnight Sun Film Fest, Box 305, 33101 Tampere, Finland; tel: 358 31 130034/235681/196149; fax: 358 31 230121.

**MOSCOW INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, July, USSR. Major competitive fest, held in odd yrs, alternating w/ Karlovy Vary Film Festival in Czechoslovakia. Program incl. feature film competition (20 films produced in previous 2 yrs), short film competition, out-of-competition screenings of newly-made films, exhibition of films presented at other int'l fests, retros. Awards: Grand Prix, Special Prize, Best Actress/Actor. Concurrent film market. Format: 35mm. Deadline: Apr. 1. Contact: Yuri T. Khodjaev, Sovinterfest, State Commission for Cinematography, 10 Khokhlovsky Pereulok, Moscow 103009, USSR; tel: 2977645; telex: 411263 FEST.

**TROIA INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF CINEMA**, May 28-June 4, Portugal. Costa Azul, on Portuguese peninsula, setting for FIAPF-recognized fest for feature-length films, now in 8th yr. Sections: Competition (Official Section), Info, 1st Works, American Independents, Man & Environment (doc & fiction) & film market. Awards: Gold Dolphin (Grand Prize), Silver Dolphin, Bronze Dolphin. Work must be completed after June 1990. This yr's program incl. tributes to Indian cinema & literary works in film. Format: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 1/2". Deadline: Mar. 31. Contact: Mário Ventura, pres./Salvato Menezes, prog. dir., Festival Internacional de Cinema de Troia, Troia 2902 Setúbal Codex, Portugal; tel: (65) 44121/44124; fax: (65) 44123; telex: 18138. US contact: Thomas de La Cal, 500 E. 63rd St., Apt. 10D, New York, NY 10021; (212) 421-3099.

**WELLINGTON FILM FESTIVAL**, July 5-20, New Zealand. Celebrating 20th anniv., noncompetitive, invitational fest of new int'l cinema accepts NZ premieres of features, docs & shorts; held in conjunction w/ Auckland. Combined audiences surpass 130,000. Fest has grown to major event in New Zealand, attracting several local distributors & exhibitors. Selected films from both Auckland & Wellington invited to screen in travelling film fest in South Island cities of Christchurch & Dunedin. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: Apr. 30. Contact: Bill Gosden, Wellington Film Festival, Box 9544, Te Aro, Wellington, New Zealand; tel: 644 850-162; fax: 644 801-7304.

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## Conferences ■ Seminars

**AUTO-CENSORSHIP:** The Chilling Effect After the Fact symposium to be held Sat., May 4 at the New School for Social Research in NYC. Cosponsored by Media Alliance, AIVF & New School. Artists, writers, curators, publishers, journalists, filmmakers encouraged to show & tell how they've been affected by or succumbed to recent censorship attempts. Contact: New School for Social Research, Media Studies Dept., 2 W. 13th St., New York, NY 10011; (212) 627-9629.

**FILM ARTS FOUNDATION** spring workshops: Guided Intermediate Screenwriting, Mar. 4-May 13; Optical Printer Filmmaking: Mar. 13-Apr. 17; Sound Intensive I, Recording in the Field Basics: Mar. 16 & 17. Contact: FAF, 346 Ninth St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103.

**FILM IN THE CITIES** Video Weekend Workshops: VHS video production, Apr. 6 & 13; VHS video editing, Mar. 9 & 10 and Apr. 27 & 28. Contact: Film in the Cities, 2388 University Ave., St. Paul, MN 55114.

**FILM/VIDEO ARTS** Spring Workshops: Beg. Film Prod., Mar. 20-June 5; Advanced Film Prod., Mar. 28-June 13; Advanced Screenwriting, Apr. 3-May 8; Intro to 3/4" Video Editing, Mar. 2 & 3, and May 4 & 5; Advanced 3/4" Editing, Mar. 9 & 10 and May 18 & 19; Arri SR Workshop, May 4 & 5; Essentials of Prod. Insurance, Apr. 30; The Art of Producing w/ Monty Ross, Mar. 9; Intro to Digital Effects, Apr. 15-May 20; Time Code Basics, Apr. 6; Intro to Optical Printing, Apr. 13 & 14. Contact: F/VA, 317 Broadway, New York, NY 10003; (212) 673-9361.

**HISTORY IN FILM & TV** Symposium on Oral History, March 21-22 at Hooper-Schaefer Fine Arts Ctr., Baylor Univ., Waco, TX. Features Henry Hampton & Ken Burns. Sponsored by Baylor Univ. Institute for Oral History w/ KCTF Public TV for Central Texas. Registration fee: \$50. Symposium session also transmitted via satellite to participating sites by PBS Adult Learning Satellite Service. For symposium info, contact: Institute for Oral History, Baylor Univ., Box 97271, Waco, TX 76798-7271; (817) 755-3437. For teleconference info, contact: PBS Adult Learning Satellite Service, 1320 Braddock Pl., Alexandria, VA 22314; (703) 739-5363; (800) 257-2578.

**NAT'L ASSN OF ARTISTS' ORGANIZATIONS** conference to be held Apr. 10-14 in Washington, D.C. Events incl. Art Activist Day, membership mtg & panels on ethics of money, artists of color, artists working abroad & more. Contact: NAAO, 918 F St., Washington, DC 20004; (202) 347-6350.

**SOCIALIST SCHOLARS CONFERENCE:** After the Flood: The World Transformed, to be held Apr. 5-7 at the Borough of Manhattan Community College in NYC. Speakers incl. Father Daniel Berrigan, Manning Marable, Frances Fox Piven, Paul Robeson, Jr., Guillermo Ungo & Ellen Willis. Contact: R.L. Norman, Jr., CUNY Democratic Socialists Club, Rm. 800, 33 W. 42nd St., New York, NY 10036.

## Films ■ Tapes Wanted

**ATA TRADING** Corp. seeks rights for films & videos for distribution worldwide into all markets. Contact: ATA Trading Corp., McAlpin House, 50 W. 34th St., Ste. 5C6, New York, NY 10001; (212) 594-6460.

**CHANNEL L WORKING GROUP** seeks 3/4" & 1/2" video entries for 10-wk Manhattan cable series *Video*

**Notices are listed free of charge. AIVF members receive first priority; others are included as space permits. The Independent reserves the right to edit for length. Deadlines for Notices will be respected. These are the 8th of the month, two months prior to cover date, e.g., March 8 for the May issue. Send to: Independent Notices, FIVF, 625 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.**

**Spectrum.** All genres accepted, but themes should deal w/ social or political issues. Must have originated in video. Max. length: 28 min., masters required for cablecast. People of color, women, emerging artists & physically disabled encouraged to apply. Pays \$16-20/min. Send cassettes w/ SASE to: *Video Spectrum*, Ch. L Working Group, 51 Chambers St., Rm. 532, New York, NY 10007; (212) 964-2960.

**DISTRIBUTOR IN EUROPE** looking for docs on soldiers of fortune and fairy tales promoting pro-social values. Ruth Feldman, 1433 Tenth St., Santa Monica, CA 90401. (213) 394-2984.

**IMAGE UNION**, Chicago public TV's weekly half-hr series featuring work by independent film- & video-makers seeks submissions no longer than 27 min. on 3/4" videocassette. Send tapes to: *Image Union*, WTTW/Chicago, 5400 N. St. Louis Ave., Chicago, IL 60625.

**INDEPENDENT EYE**, monthly series on KQED-TV, San Francisco, seeks independent films & videos that fuse performing arts & TV medium. Maximum length: 20 min. Pays \$10/min. Contact: *Independent Eye*, KQED, 500 8th St., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 553-2269.

**LONG SHOT THEATER**, nonprofit public access program, seeks short films/videos in all genres for weekly half-hour show. 3/4" cassettes preferred. Works should be under 25 min. & accompanied by brief description. No fees or awards. Contact: Todd Sargent, *Long Shot Theater*, 48 Sawyer Ave., Boston, MA 02125; (617) 287-1980.

**NIGHTSHIFT** seeks student films & videos, all genres, for broadcast on WCVB-Ch. 5, Boston. Entering 19th season, *NightShift* is New England's weekly student art showcase. Submit 3/4" tapes & a short bio to: Chay Yew, producer, *NightShift*, WCVB-TV Boston, 5 TV Pl., Needham, MA 02194-2303; (617) 449-0400.

## Opportunities ■ Gigs

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**ASSISTANTSHIPS AVAILABLE:** MFA program in film at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale. Program offers concentrations in narrative, doc., animation, experimental, optical printing & film studies. Appl. deadline: Mar. 15 for fall semester, 1991. Qualified applicants contact: Dept. of Cinema & Photography, Southern IL Univ., Carbondale, IL 62901; (618) 453-2365.

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## Publications

**1987-1991 VIDEO TAPE REVIEW**, Video Data Bank's newest catalog, now avail. \$3 donation requested to help cover costs of printing & mailing. Contact: Video Data Bank, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 37 S. Wabash, Chicago, IL 60603.

**1991 ADVOCACY HANDBOOK** incl. contact lists of NYS legislators & committees, checklist on organizing grassroots advocacy campaigns in your community, sample letters to legislators, an action timeline & facts about the 1991 arts platform. \$6.50 per copy, plus \$1.50 shipping & handling. Contact: Alliance of NYS Arts Councils, 1002 Breunig Rd., Stewart Airport, New Windsor, NY 12553; (914) 564-6462.

**BORDER CROSSING:** *The Cinema of Johan Van Der Keuken*, catalog of exhibit & touring series organized by Richard Herskowitz, avail. from Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell Univ., Ithaca, NY 14853.

**CHOICE:** *A Guide to Film & Video about Women's Reproductive Health & Freedom* now avail. from Media Network. \$7.50 to individuals, \$11.50 to orgs. Contact: Media Network, 121 Fulton St., 5th fl., New York, NY 10038; (212) 619-3455.

**PROGRAM FOR ART ON FILM:** Art on Film Database incl. over 17,000 listings on int'l film & video prods on visual arts. For more info contact: Program for Art on Film, 980 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10021; (212) 988-4876.

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## Resources ■ Funds

**CHECKERBOARD FOUNDATION** postproduction grants of \$5-10,000 avail. to NYS residents. Deadline: Mar. 20. Contact: Checkerboard Fnd., c/o Media Alliance, 356 W. 58th St., New York, NY 10019; (212) 560-2919.

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**NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES** Projects in Media deadline: Mar. 15. Contact: James Dougherty, NEH, 1100 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20506; (202) 786-0278.

**NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS** deadline: Mar. 1 for all categories. Contact: NYSCA, 915 Broadway, New York, NY 10010; (212) 614-2904.

**PENNSYLVANIA COUNCIL ON THE ARTS** provides grants for prod. projects of PA artists through nonprofit, fiscal sponsors. Deadline: Apr. 1. Contact: PCA, Finance Bldg., Rm. 216, Harrisburg, PA 17120; (717) 787-6883.

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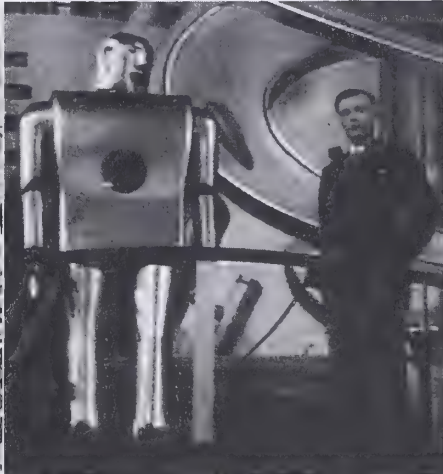
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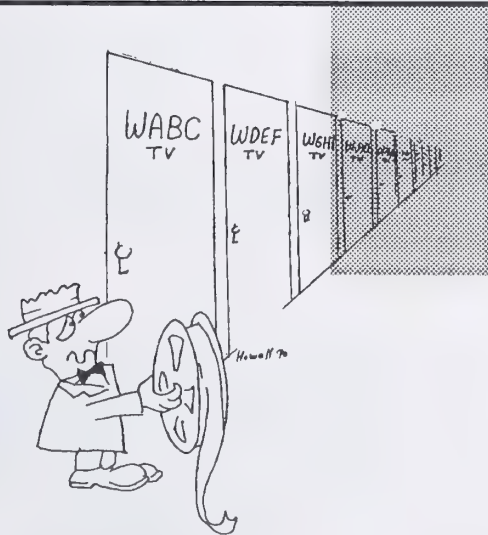
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## RAY NAVARRO: 1964–1990

Raymond Robert Navarro, political activist, video-maker, writer, and former editorial assistant at *The Independent*, died at St. Vincent's Hospital in Manhattan on November 9, 1990, after a 10-month battle with AIDS. Born in Hawthorne, California, and raised in Simi Valley, California, he was 26 years old. After studying fine arts, multi-media art, and video at Otis Parsons School of Art and Design in Los Angeles, the California Institute for the Arts in Valencia, California, and the Whitney Independent Study Program in New York City, Ray became a central figure in the AIDS activist community, producing radical media and organizing multicultural screenings to fight AIDS. He wrote a number of articles on AIDS media and other topics, including several published in *The Independent*. A major essay on gay and lesbian politics and AIDS organizing, "Shocking Pink Praxis: Race and Gender on the ACT UP Front Lines," which he coauthored with his friend and frequent collaborator Catherine Saalfeld, will appear in a forthcoming anthology edited by Diana Fuss, entitled *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories. We asked several of his friends and colleagues to record their memories of Ray.*

### JEAN CARLOMUSTO

Ray was a vital member of the AIDS community and an inspirational force as a media activist. He had an energizing presence and knew how to get things done. I have a clear image of him seated at a crowded coffeeshop table talking politics and art a mile a minute. He was brilliant, witty, and chewed with his mouth open on purpose.

He had a knack for uncovering the personal, political, and representational aspects of an issue. I remember waiting for Ray the morning of the Stop the Church demonstration at Saint Patrick's Cathedral. This action was aimed at Cardinal O'Connor for opposing distribution of condoms to prevent the spread of HIV and at the Catholic Church for opposing reproductive freedom for women. Ray pulled up to the curb at nine on a Sunday morning, in his old car, dressed in a ski parka and a crown of thorns. Outside the cathedral that day, Ray was a revolutionary Christ who would have pleased Pasolini.

Ray was a pleasure to work with. His efforts at the Gay Men's Health Crisis were exemplary. He and Catherine Saalfeld produced a program for the *Living with AIDS Show* on the issue of needle exchange, *Bleach, Teach, and Outreach* which supported the New York City needle exchange program (now defunct) at a time when it was under considerable pressure. He also worked on distribution strategies for our *Safer Sex Shorts*, getting them included in daily programs of porn

houses like Show Palace. He was a member of the Latino Advisory Panel (a group of Latino men working on AIDS advising GMHC) and pioneered the Safer Sex Bar Presentations in the Latino community. As founding members of DIVA TV (Damned Interfering Video Activists), a small group of us who were doing media activism within ACT UP would meet and think of ways we could work together to create videotapes from within the AIDS activist movement. Perhaps his most wonderful talent was the way he blended work and play. He was as vigorous as his politics, as vibrant as his work.



**Ray Navarro**

Photos: Gary Winter

Shortly before he died, I asked Ray why he came to New York. He replied, "I wanted to do more community-based work and to develop different ways of distributing videos." In a short period of time, Ray did precisely what he had set out to do. He did it in a way that garnered him many friends who cared a great deal about him and miss him dearly. I will always cherish his memory whenever grassroots activism and revolutionary media are put into practice.

*Jean Carlomusto is the coordinator of audiovisual at the Gay Men's Health Crisis in New York City.*

### JOHN GREYSON

He loved to argue. He loved the Smiths. He aspired to Bratdom. He loved the queens at the Plaza, a Latino drag bar where we used to dance.

Especially Olga, who had been there since his first visit as a terrified teen. He loved to busstop at the Catch One. He loved chicken and waffles. He loved vibrancy, and loved video, because it could produce vibrancy at every stage: the shooting, the editing, the showing, the arguing. Like his main collaborators (and he loved the vibrancy of collaboration), video offered him a process for his art and his politics that was alive and vulnerable. He loved the danger of video.

Nothing was simply a video "job." December 1987: While we were agonizing over a short documentary profile of the Minority AIDS Project in L.A., he was simultaneously agonizing over the Bill Viola video installation at the Museum of Contemporary Art (where he worked), agonizing over a solidarity tape for a Salvadorean refugee support group (where he volunteered), and agonizing over another draft of his *Defect* script, an experimental narrative concerning Cuban spies, gay CIA agents, ballet dancers, and museum education programs. He struggled with all four passionately, refusing to compromise the art and politics of each, demanding of each a complexity that most would refuse, accomplishing each with a humor that was irresistible.

In the urgency and agony of the moment, along with so many others, we mourn his untimely death, the tapes he won't produce, the articles he won't write, the arguments he won't have. Ray will always be with some of us, on every shoot, in every edit, at every screening, on every dance floor: demanding vibrancy, demanding new priorities, reminding us to laugh, and to argue.

*John Greyson is an independent film/videomaker in Toronto, who taught video at CalArts.*

### LILLIAN JIMENEZ

I first met Ray Navarro at the press screenings of the National Latino Film and Video Festival in 1988, held at Warner's corporate headquarters in midtown Manhattan. Ray came on behalf of the *Guardian* newspaper. He was very sweet, but I did not fully realize how brilliant he was until he started to talk to me about the films. I sort of did a double take and began to respond to him in earnest. He wrote a wonderful review—full of great insights. In 1990, he galvanized many of us at the Latino caucus of the Show the Right Thing conference with his passion and knowledge about the need for educating the Latino community about AIDS. At that time, Yvette Nieves-Cruz from the CineFestival of San Antonio and I agreed to have special programs curated by Ray at our festivals. To his credit, Ray attended the screenings in San Antonio and Austin even though he was pretty sick. While Ray was too sick to curate the upcoming National Latino Film and Video



# The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers

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Festival of El Museo del Barrio's special program of AIDS media geared for the Latino community, it was organized because of Ray. Therefore, the festival will be dedicated to his memory.

Ray asked the right questions and put himself out to break down barriers within the Latino community and the independent film and video community to come to a better understanding about our differences and our similarities. He put himself out on a limb at times—like when he spoke at the Austin AIDS screening. This was the first time that he had spoken to a predominantly Chicano audience as a gay Chicano man actively involved in AIDS education work. And even though he was really scared, he stood up in front of that audience. And he was wonderful.

I don't think I'll ever meet anyone quite like him and feel privileged to have known him. He was one of the most courageous and sweetest men I have ever met. And as my very wise son has counseled me, if I keep him in my mind, then he'll disappear, but if I keep him in my heart, then he'll always stay there. Ray, you'll always have a place in my heart for your brilliance, humanity, and courage.

*Lillian Jimenez is the coordinator of the Paul Robeson Fund at the Funding Exchange in New York City.*

## ELLEN SPIRO

During the span of Ray's battle with AIDS—a series of tremendous struggles against several opportunistic infections—his creative force was powerfully active. He harnessed his creative energy as a healing force for his own body and the society he constantly fought to change and heal. After he lost most of his sight from meningitis (he could distinguish light from dark, sensations which he would describe in detail), Ray collaborated on many projects. It seemed that with each of his friends he was brewing up a different concoction: videos, installations, writings, photography, etc. His imaginative brilliance and love became a sort of magnet for those around him. Every time I came to visit he was working on something with someone and eager to document his latest ideas. Once when I visited him on the seventh floor of St. Vincent's Hospital, we decided to record his ideas on video. He felt and looked particularly gorgeous that day, on his way up after a near-devastating battle with another opportunistic infection. When we got the camera set up, he seemed transformed by its presence, addressing it directly and intimately, interspersing his words with ecstatic smiles—like he was greeting an old friend he hadn't seem for a long time:

*Hello, little Camera. Am I looking into it? Oh, Camera (sigh), you're so funny, little Camera. Listen, Camera, this is Ray—current video artist, temporarily disabled, and permanently hopeful. Listen, Camera. Whatever happens and we don't know yet, do we? We'll just have to wait and see.*



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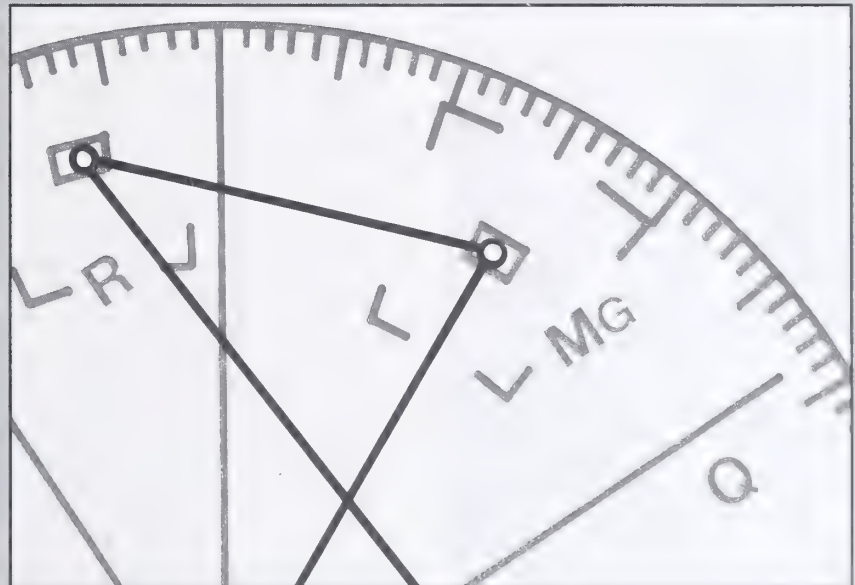
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won't we? Oh, I don't know what to say in front of the little Camera; let me tell you this, little Camera: let's get serious for a minute. Camera, life is a wonderful thing and once it's almost taken from you...I mean...life is worth living. It's like Herbert Marcuse says, life is worth living. But we have to remember that he also said that change is possible. You see, that's more than just a political statement; that's some real cool philosophy. Life is worth living and the possibility for change exists, so, who knows, little Camera....

I miss Ray's warm voice and presence, his ability to inspire and mobilize and his intense commitment to personal and social change.

*Ellen Spiro is an independent videomaker who lives in New York City.*

**GREGG BORDOWITZ**

Ray had an enormous ego. Its size was completely justified by the enormity of his brilliance. Initially our relationship was shaped by our constant arguing. Each one tried to prove that he was smarter than the other. Ray was a master of the esoteric reference. Up until two weeks before he died, from his hospital bed, he was determined to quote from books he hadn't read.

He could be very insecure and vulnerable. Before speaking on a panel together at the 1989 Yale Lesbian and Gay Studies Conference, we walked around the campus to ease our anxiety. He confided in me that he was nervous for two reasons: he didn't think people would take him seriously because he lacked an academic education (he graduated from an art school), and he didn't think people would listen to him because he was a person of color. He prepared two lectures for that panel. He presented a discussion of AIDS educational material made for audiences of people of color. The other presentation concerned the subjectivity of Latino gay men. This topic was the subject of a videotape that Ray continued to work on through the periods of illness and in spite of his blindness. He was not able to finish it.

Ray became very religious during the last few months of his life. During his first hospital stay we had our first discussion about religion—the first of many. I remember Ray, looking very sad and serious, asking me “How can I believe in God after I've read Nietzsche?” We both had to laugh at the pretention behind that one. It was then we both realized that the work of the nineteenth-century philosopher and the ideas of many others that had influenced us held little relevance to what we now faced. We were not prepared for illness and death. A week before he died, Ray asked his sister Christine to buy me a present. It was a volume of poems by Antonin Artaud. The poem Ray wanted me to read was titled “To have done with the judgment of God.” On the first page of the book Ray had a message inscribed: “forward to our future shared transgressions.” This message was gracious, fierce, and determined—very much like Ray. I love him, and I miss him greatly.

*Gregg Bordowitz is the assistant coordinator of audio-visual at the Gay Men's Health Crisis in New York City.*

**CATHERINE LORD**

Ray, thank you. Thanks for telling me about Los Angeles, about good drag bars, about porn theaters, about Roscoe's Chicken & Waffles. Thanks for drawing a huge stupid-looking Mickey Mouse in the CalArts hallway with a balloon that said, “Mickey says...the best is divest!!” (It got one art school's endowment out of South Africa.) Speaking of art schools, thanks for being the baby lefty—it's what the lefties on the faculty called you—with the big smile who always lugged around



underlined Art Theory Xeroxes and kept the wannabee multi-millionaire painters pissed off by bugging them about what it was they were doing. Since we were, for a while, teacher and student, we argued about pleasure and politics. You wanted every last nuance of serious analysis in whatever you did. I wanted you to seduce people into action, not to berate them or bore them. So Ray, I think getting into drag as Jesus Christ at the St. Patrick's demo takes care of that: Jesus just doesn't look the same any more, to a lot of people. Thanks for telling me bad jokes in St. Vincent's to make me feel better about what a mess you were in. (And who else would try to read Deleuze and Guattari in the hospital so as not to waste time?) Thanks for showing me what it means not to give up when I needed to know about that. Thank you for becoming an artist whose work was formed by being gay, being radical, and being Chicano, because that work *had* to be invented. A lot of people decide to be artists because, contrary to rumor, it can be a comfortably unexamined life. But you wanted to make a revolution happen, wherever it could, whatever it took. Generous and stubborn, you did more in your 26 years than most people do in a lifetime. All your talking (everybody knows you always did most of the talking) was part of your work, and it stays around too. What you did makes a lot more work thinkable, even possible. Thanks.

*Catherine Lord is the chair of the Department of Studio Art at the University of California at Irvine and former dean of the Art School at CalArts.*

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## LETTERS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

try," July 1976. I could also mention my own "A Whole Technology of Dyeing," which appeared in *Daedalus*, Fall 1985.)

4. Finally I come to my supposedly "laughable" claim that 16mm could have been explored professionally before it was. Winestine's language begins to defeat him at this point. He says, "16mm projection is frequently painfully bad." While this is certainly true, it also clearly implies that such projection frequently isn't that bad. Equally, it isn't 35mm—but then I never said that it was. I was talking possibilities—for instance, for the nascent thirties documentary movement. As to the possibility that 28mm might have been exploited, I was simply trying to illustrate my thesis—the conservatism of the industry. There are roads not taken—and not taken because professionals all too often find them laughable. Winestine believes somehow that 28mm was rejected because 35 and 16 were enough. But 16 wasn't yet really to hand.

Winestine suggests that *The Independent* should have checked the accuracy of my article first. What saddens me about his ill-informed letter is not its unnecessary and misplaced rudeness but rather, exactly, his own inaccuracies and ignorances. I believe professionals do themselves a disservice when they substitute for real understanding of the technological roads not taken a simple kneejerk approach which argues (with a curious passion, I might add) that whatever exists is the best in the best of all possible worlds. Winestine's letter is a somewhat lamentable example of this tendency and a fine illustration of my thesis about the conservatism of professional attitudes.

## NOT SO SUNNY SKIES

To the editor:

I was surprised to see the headline for Renee Tajima's article "Sun Shines on Florida Independents" [January/February 1991]. Although it is true that Norm Easterbrook is working furiously to obtain contribution-in-kind production facilities for Florida filmmakers, a couple of clouds are looming larger than ever in the Florida skies. This last year, the Florida Endowment for the Humanities Board decided that it would no longer fund any media, film, or video projects and is not accepting any proposals for film/video. This decision comes one year after Florida opted not to become a member of the Southern Humanities Media Fund, an umbrella organization of humanities' councils in the Southeast that pool their media funds to provide greater support to fewer projects. Only Florida and Louisiana opted out of the coalition. Now it looks as if Florida filmmakers will lose yet another source of funding.

Through phone conversations, the FEH has told me that past film/video projects have either not been completed or have been disappointing productions. Also, because film/video is so expensive, they are trying to spread their dollars to a greater number of recipients. I have suggested to Ann Henderson, FEH director, that FEH put together an advisory board of filmmakers to ensure future decision-making be guided by those "in the know." Aside from \$30,000 to Nancy Yasecko and \$25,000 to *Roots of Rhythm*, most FEH dollars have gone to non-filmmakers. Honestly, I doubt if very many English professors could produce programming that I would want to see, but that's the avenue FEH has

pursued in the past. FEH is located in Tampa (813/272-3473).

Congratulations to Norm Easterbrook for his efforts, but I won't be looking for my sunscreen anytime soon.

—Kristin Andersen  
Tampa, FL

## ASIA SOCIETY ADDENDUM

To the editor:


Just a few words about the Asia Society's film program...other than spelling my name wrong, the facts were a little off. I was hired by the Asia Society to develop and produce films about Asia. I soon discovered that there was no money and no budget. The society's film department had recently been dismantled, allegedly because of lack of funds. Since I could never duplicate a successful and wide-ranging film program like the one that folded, I decided that a small-scale feature film series would be possible with minimal funding. I approached the former head of the education department, Tim Plummer, who supported the program with money from his department. The film series was successful from the start. It never earned much money for the society, but we usually had a full house. After about a year I moved on to produce films and video and Somi Roy took over the program. Somi had started as a volunteer, but his talent and enthusiasm for film programming made it obvious that he was the right person to continue the film series, so with Tim Plummer's support the Asia Society hired him on staff. His leaving is a loss for the society.

—Barbara Winard

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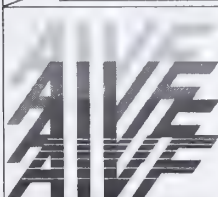
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
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## LAWRENCE SAPADIN: A DECADE AT THE HELM

December 4, 1990, marked the tenth anniversary of Lawrence Sapadin's first day on the job as the executive director of AIVF. After a decade of service, Larry left AIVF at the end of January to assume the position of vice president, acquisitions at Fox/Lorber Associates, a film and television distribution company in New York City.

The contrast between AIVF's current roster of nearly 5,000 members and the mere hundreds enrolled in 1980 attests to Larry's leadership and his dedication to expanding and improving the organization's services and outreach to independent producers across the country. During his tenure as director, the programs of AIVF and its foundation affiliate FIVF—such as *The Independent*, the Festival Bureau, various insurance packages designed for members, and the trove of information available through the AIVF office—became mainstays for myriad film/videomakers who choose to work outside the structures of commercial media.

Larry came to AIVF after working as a labor lawyer. But he was no stranger to independent filmmaking, having studied film as an undergraduate at the State University of New York at Old Westbury. He continued his film education in Paris, where he also worked in various cinema-related occupations, including a stint at the Cinéma-matèque Française. He attended the law school at Northeastern University in Boston after returning to the States.

One of Larry's primary contributions to AIVF was his unflagging efforts as an advocate for independent medi makers. He recalls that within days of undertaking the directorship of AIVF he re-

ceived an urgent telephone call from an independent producer who wanted to contest a contract issued by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting for its *Independent Anthology* series. CPB initiated the series after Congress directed CPB to increase its financing of independent productions in a bill that was the result of a protracted lobbying campaign mounted by AIVF and other groups interested in improving the quality and scope of US public television. Larry promptly convinced all the recipients of *Independent Anthology* grants not to sign the questionable contract and assisted them in negotiating better terms.

In 1984, Larry played a key role in founding the National Coalition of Public Broadcasting Producers, which was formed in response to CPB's repeated reluctance to honor their congressional mandate to fund independent production. In the late eighties, the Coalition and AIVF then joined with individuals and groups around the country in renewed efforts on behalf of independent representation in public TV, which led to establishment of the Independent Television Service in 1988. Throughout and following the lobbying campaign, Larry acted as co-chair of the Coalition and now serves as president and chair of the ITVS.

Other tangible milestones of Larry's term as AIVF chief advocate include the limited contract negotiated with the Screen Actors Guild and the

revised rules for deposit issued by the Copyright Office. At the same time, he steered AIVF during a difficult period of increasing economic and political conservatism. In its defense of independent media, AIVF protested the National Endowment for the Humanities' condemnation of work it had funded during the Carter years but which William Bennett, head of the agency under Reagan, deemed ideologically suspect. And it supported filmmakers who had been denied customs waivers by the US Information Agency, based on political criteria. Larry also worked with a coalition of artists' groups to counter tax rules that imposed an extraordinary burden on film- and videomakers who work with low budgets.

To further the institutional stability and growth of AIVF, Larry secured grants from major foundations and public agencies: the New York State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Ford Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and a variety of smaller grants for AIVF/FIVF endeavors. Similarly, he helped design a project to enhance international cooperation among independent producers, funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, and oversaw the implementation of a grant-making program for independent projects sponsored by the Benton Foundation, the Beldon Fund, and the Edelman Family, administered by FIVF.

Commenting on his term at AIVF, Larry cites the creation of enhanced opportunities for independent producers within public television as his most significant accomplishment. "We did something that no one thought could be done." A close second in importance, he says, was his development of a professional and productive staff for the organization.

Larry's understanding of the work of independent producers always informed his commitment to the organization and its members' needs. He puts it concisely: "It's a heroic undertaking, and I have enormous respect for these artists." We at AIVF wish him continued success in all his future endeavors.

## AND THE WINNERS ARE...

Ten independent productions were awarded \$62,500 by the Benton Foundation, the Beldon Fund, and the Edelman Family Fund through the 1990 FIVF Donor-Advised Grant program.

This year, the Benton Foundation and Beldon Fund supported collaborative projects between independent producers and nonprofit organizations on media dealing with environmental issues. Funding was awarded in three categories.

In the first category, Mark Mori received \$10,000 from the Benton Foundation to condense *Building Bombs*, a personal look at the social and environmental impact of a nuclear weapons facility, for use by Greenpeace, SANE/Freeze, and the Energy Research Foundation. The Beldon Fund gave Keyah Productions \$10,000 for *The Caribou People*, a tape on the social and cultural, as well as environmental threat posed by oil development.

The second category offered \$2,500 to producers and environmental groups to collaborate at the preproduction stage. The Benton Foundation awarded Arlen Slobodow \$2,500 to collaborate with Environmental Action on *Waste Not*, a tape educating industry to reduce waste.

Projects funded in the third category did not require organizational collaboration. The Benton Foundation and Beldon Fund awarded Marion Lipschutz \$10,000 for *Niaby: Not in Anyone's Backyard*, a video about Save Our County's campaign against toxic waste incinerators. *The People's Land: The Cree and Inuit Struggle to Preserve James Bay*, by Kevin Balling, also received \$10,000.

The Edelman Family awarded \$20,000 to five projects. *Living with Tourette Syndrome*, by Laurel Chiten, received \$4,000. Arthur Dong's *Coming Out Under Fire*, a chronicle of the military experiences of gay men and lesbians during World War II, was given \$3,000. Leslie Harris was awarded \$4,000 for *Just Another Girl on the IRT*, a narrative film on unwanted pregnancy. *Palestinian Diaries*, produced by Jonathan Miller and Ilan Ziv, received \$4,000. *Elect the Victim*, by Pam Yates and Peter Kinoy, the third part of their series *Up and Out of Poverty*, was granted \$5,000.

The 1990 panelists were Barbara Abrash, Karen Hirsch, and Hye Jung Park. Project administrator for this year's fund was Kevin Duggan.

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And even in these difficult times, you'll find that we continue to improve the working environment for our primary customer, the independent producer who is working with his or her own money. On the culinary side, we added a better lunchtime menu, and cookies and fruit in the afternoon. On the equipment side we added five more D-2 machines, a Rank with Sunburst II for color correcting film

and tape, an AMS AudioFile and audio recording booth, color cameras for the 7 on-line edit rooms, and computerized off-line editing to the seventh floor. Speaking of floors, we'll be utilizing the second floor of our building on 17th Street for the first time in the coming year, bringing to a total of ten, the floors used for NVI customers and the necessary support services.

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**I**N RESPONSE to our December announcement, National Video Resources, a new project of The Rockefeller Foundation which seeks to strengthen the distribution of independent film and video on videocassette, received requests from many of you to be added to its mailing list. Thanks.

The second issue of NVR Reports, entitled "Fiber Optics & the Future of Television" discusses the potential this technology holds for the independent community.

If you forgot to let us know that you want to be added to our permanent mailing list, call us at 212-274-8080 or write to NVR, 73 Spring Street, Room 606, New York, NY 10012. Tell us your profession: producer, distributor, or whatever, and be sure to include your zip code.

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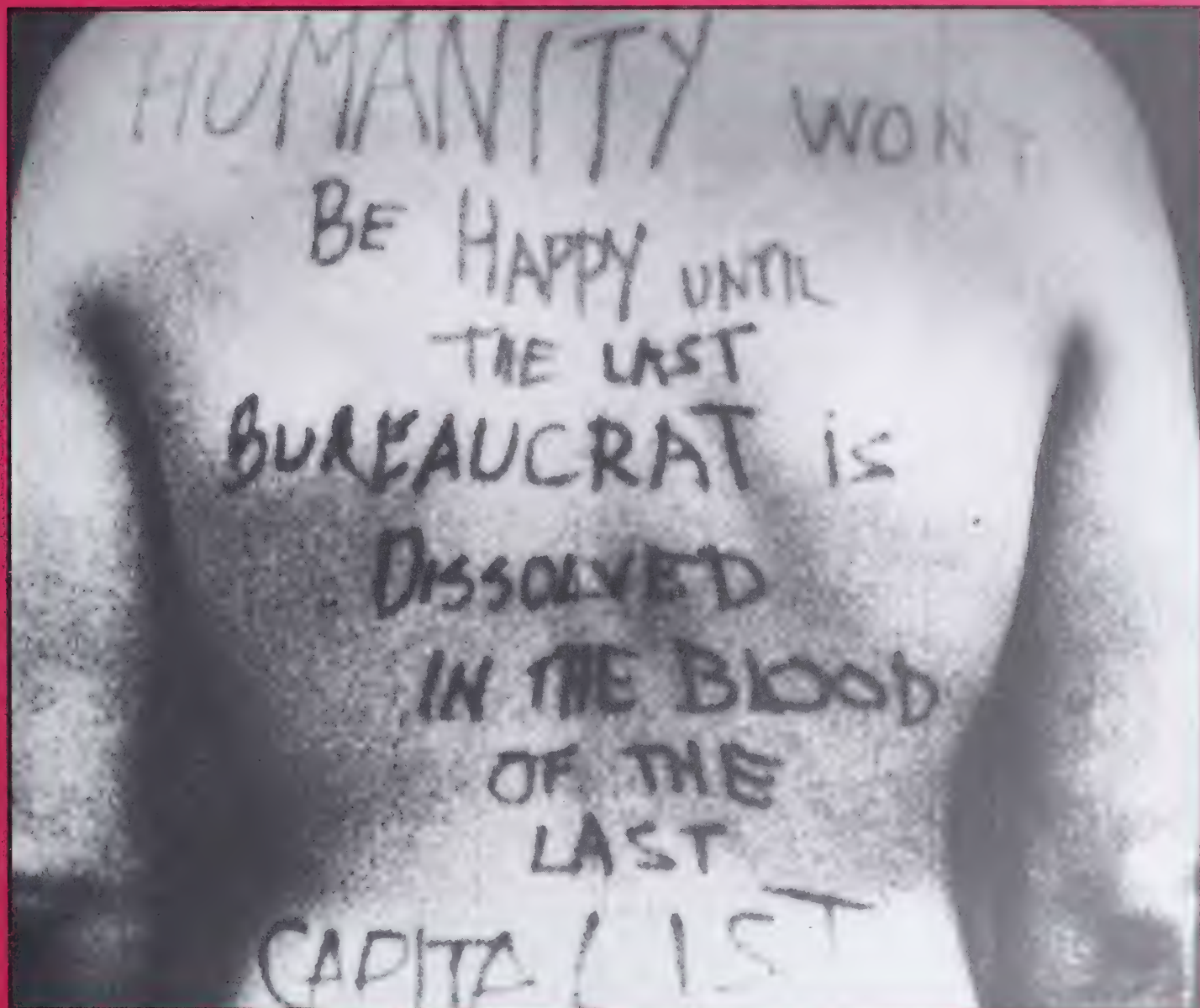
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**The Travels of Robert Kramer**

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**Also: Marlon Riggs'**  
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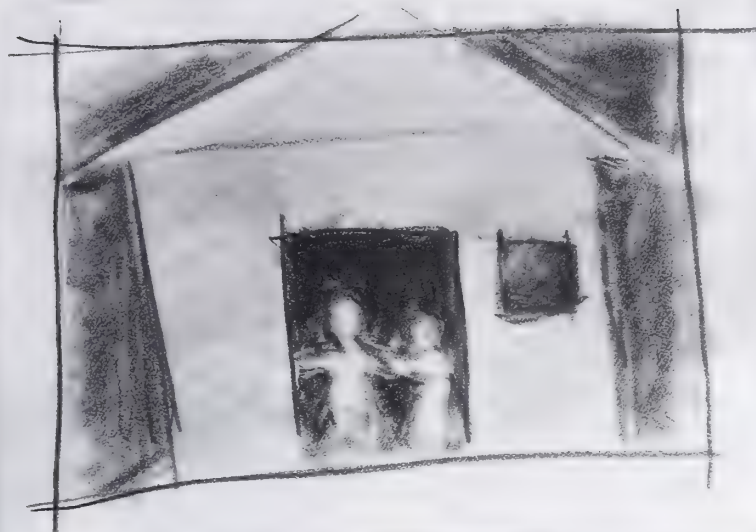
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4



17



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COVER: During the decade between 1965 and 1975, Robert Kramer produced numerous feature films showing the New Left movement from within, such as *Ice*, a political fiction of urban insurrection. Soon after, Kramer left the US, finally settling in Paris. In this issue, the filmmaker talks about his most recent work, *Route One/USA*, and his return to the US after 13 years. Still from *Ice* courtesy Museum of Modern Art Film Stills Archive.

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## OPERATION DISSIDENCE

### Access Producers Activate the *Gulf Crisis TV Project*

Mixing pedagogy, humor, and anger, and drawing from a panoply of oppositional voices, the *Gulf Crisis TV Project* drew widespread attention among war opponents, fueling activism and filling lacunae in coverage.

During the week of January 15, as the United Nations deadline for withdrawal from Kuwait approached and with it the imminence of war, close to a million television viewers tuned into a two-hour program seeking alternatives to war, the *Gulf Crisis TV Project*. Coproduced by public access cable groups Paper Tiger Television and Deep Dish TV, this series marks a watershed in the collaboration between the video collective and the cable access satellite distributor, which dates back to 1985. Unlike previous programs, which were limited to public access outlets on cable television, the *Gulf Crisis TV Project* was also broadcast on public television, thanks to the involvement of WYBE-TV in Philadelphia. WYBE acted as the presenting station, offering the programs free to PBS affiliates. The four half-hour shows were also picked up by Channel Four in Great Britain—another first. More significantly, Channel Four followed up with a presale of \$30,000, which will provide the financial backbone for a second set of six half-hour shows on the war and its political and historical backdrop, scheduled to air beginning February 19. Finally, the *Gulf Crisis TV Project* represents a new direction for Deep Dish TV and Paper Tiger, toward a more rapid assembly and distribution of timely programs.

Mixing pedagogy, humor, and anger, and drawing from a panoply of oppositional voices, the *Gulf Crisis TV Project* drew widespread attention among war opponents, fueling activism and filling lacunae in coverage. The programs make no bones about taking an antiwar position, and the production collective is working with the two largest movements to stop the war: the Coalition to Stop US Intervention in the Mideast and the National Campaign for Peace in the Mideast. In putting the series together, more than 1,000 community groups and cable stations were contacted. These groups submitted over 200 tapes, which ranged from edited works to raw footage. These in turn were crafted into four half-hour programs by five Paper Tiger producers under the direction of coordinating producer Kathy Scott: *War, Oil, and Power*, on the petroleum-based origins of US involvement in the Persian Gulf; *Operation Dissidence*, on the press' role in focusing and limiting public debate; *Getting Out of the Sand Trap*, on possible solutions to the crisis; and *Troops Out Now*, on peace activism in the US.

The second series, begun after the outbreak of war, is intended to be more historical and analytic

than the first, which, according to Paper Tiger's Martin Lucas, was primarily intended to raise the profile of oppositional viewpoints. The spring series will provide an investigation into media coverage, racism directed against Arab Americans, peace proposals, an analysis of historical background, footage from international sources and resistance groups, as well as questions on the allocation of funds for military and domestic programs. It will conclude on March 27 with a live teach-in at Harvard University.

Reflecting on the cable access producers' breakthrough to a tremendously expanded audience, Lucas is quick to stress that it was "not an accident." On the contrary, explains Lucas, who is coordinating producer for the second series, "we got on the case early." Deep Dish sent out a call for tapes in early November and broadcast the completed programs just two months later. Lucas attributes their efficacy to the fact that they were "building on an already existing, 10-year-old infrastructure which was begun with Paper Tiger, where we developed an aesthetic and a format. Then we created a network with Deep Dish." Lucas adds, "The debate surrounding the war was controlled, issues weren't being explored, and people were looking for something else."

Such intense activity has stretched Paper Tiger's producers to the limit. The gulf crisis team has now swelled from five on the first series to 12 on the second. With the *Gulf Crisis TV Project*, the question arose as to whether the shape and aims of the collective would change to incorporate this brand of newsgathering. Lucas responds affirmatively, explaining, "People are realizing the need for alternative news reporting. We are trying to make this longer term, to set up a structure, a network. We have now gotten to the point where need and capability have come together to create alternative programming." Deep Dish cofounder Martha Wallner echoes these thoughts: "Deep Dish has always looked to do these timely programs. We are hoping to leave some slots open in addition to our regular prerecorded programming—what we call 'timely slots.'"

Despite the breakthrough the *Gulf Crisis Project* represents, there are as yet no firm financial commitments for the longer term. The budget for the first four programs ran \$25,000, and the producers are trying to raise \$75,000 for the second series of six programs, plus the teach-in. Wallner points out how funders are reluctant to aid "infrastructural support. People don't want to support a



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Oppositional media to the war in the Persian Gulf was collected, packaged, and aired quickly through the *Gulf Crisis TV Project*, a series organized by Paper Tiger TV and Deep Dish Television.

*Courtesy Gulf Crisis TV Project*

more long-term project that talks of social problems." Noting Channel Four's presale, she adds, "It makes you cry about the domestic situation."

DOMINIC FACCINI

*Dominic Faccini is a freelance writer who contributes to Sight and Sound.*

### DISTRIBUTORS JOIN FORCES IN NEW ASSOCIATION

In anticipation of the rapidly shifting terrain of media technology, distribution patterns, and audience composition in the 1990s, independent distributors have banded together to form a new national confederation, the Independent Media Distributors Alliance (IMDA). This new membership network was announced last November at the Immediate Impact conference sponsored by Media Network in New York City.

Composed as a loose confederation rather than a more cumbersome organization with the related bureaucracy and overhead, IMDA is intended to provide an arena for collaboration and information-sharing among nonprofit and commercial distributors of independent fare. IMDA's membership presently consists of approximately three dozen distributors as well as a number of media centers, such as the South Carolina Arts Commission, which worked with distributors on last year's NewView satellite teleconference and market showcase. IMDA's steering committee consists of a vivid spectrum of independent distributors: Appalshop, Cross Currents/National Asian American Telecommunications Association, Fanlight Productions, New Day Films, Paper Tiger TV, the Video Project, Video Data Bank, and Women Make Movies.

Battling the fragmented and homogenized nature of information and communication in the 1990s, which tends to marginalize and exclude alternative media products, IMDA is intended to facilitate communications among independent distributors, as well as between them and their audiences. Their mission statement declares, "We are dedicated both to creative integrity and to the

economic survival of the producers whose work we distribute.... We are equally committed to understanding and meeting the needs of communities and audiences who use our programming, as well as educating and developing new audiences for independent work." IMDA also states that it seeks to strengthen the field through networking and resource sharing, developing common strategies for audience development and expansion, exploring new technologies and approaches to distribution, and advocating for the interest of independent producers, distributors, and their audiences.

IMDA's first major project is the production of a membership directory, which is currently proceeding with the assistance of a \$10,000 grant from the New York State Council on the Arts. According to Bob Gale, former distribution director of Intermedia Arts who was hired as IMDA's part-time coordinator, the directory is intended primarily for users of media, more than producers. These buyers currently lack a comprehensive guide to sources of independent film and video.

IMDA is currently at press with its second issue of *Pipeline*, a newsletter linking members and offering information on recent developments and activities. The first issue covered such topics as personnel changes, newly released distributor catalogues, organizational restructurings (e.g., Black Filmmaker Foundation's move away from distribution and toward membership services), and the availability of computer on-line services, such as the *MAIN Travel Sheet* through America Online.

IMDA is planning its second annual meeting in March, at which time the membership will elect a new steering committee. Membership is open to any current distributor of independent film or video who supports the goals of the organization and is willing to collaborate with their peers. Contact: Bob Gale, IMDA coordinator, at (612) 298-0117; or write: Art Base, Box 2154, St. Paul, MN 55102.

ISABELLE FREDA

*Isabelle Freda is a graduate student in Cinema Studies at New York University.*






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Independent distributors and PBS  
are at odds over the use of the  
PBS name and logo in marketing  
and promoting programs aired  
on public television.

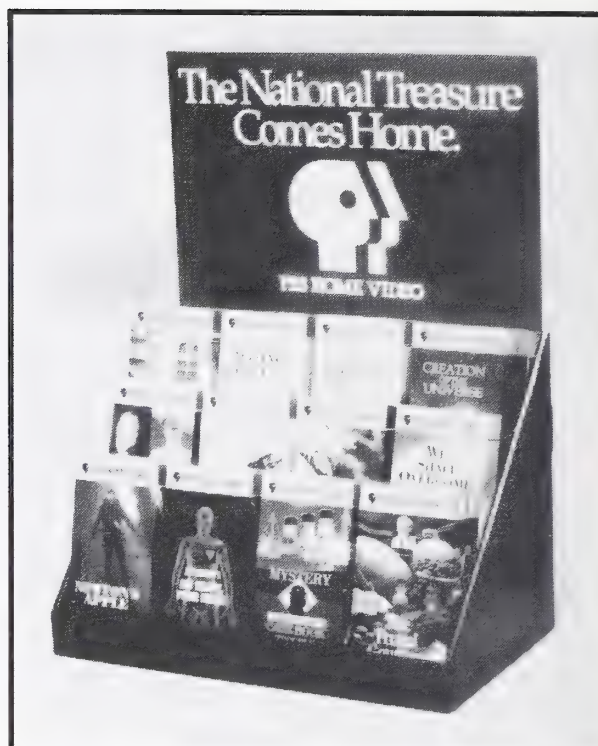
Courtesy PBS Home Video

## PBS VIDEO DISTRIBS PLAY MONOPOLY

In its most recent strategy for financial survival in a competitive marketplace, the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) has again found itself at odds with independents. This time the issue is promotion and marketing—specifically, whether independent distributors and producers may use the PBS logo and name in promoting videotapes that have aired on public television, and, secondly, the use of toll-free 800 telephone numbers to sell programs off-air. The newly formed Independent Media Distributors Alliance (IMDA) claims that PBS's regulations "walk dangerously close to extortion" and "provide an unfair competitive advantage" to PBS Video, which distributes to the educational market, and to PBS Home Video, PBS's coventure with the home video distributor Pacific Arts.

The controversy heated up last fall when Mitchell Block, president of Direct Cinema, received a preemptive letter from PBS legal staff prohibiting the use of the PBS logo and name on promotional materials. Subsequent contact with PBS revealed that, as a result of the PBS/Pacific Arts deal, independent distributors were prohibited from using the PBS logo, and that any reference to PBS *might* be considered a legal infringement of PBS's exclusive license to Pacific Arts. In their position paper titled "Imperial Ventures: PBS Moves into the Distribution Business," IMDA protested, "the names PBS Video and PBS Home Video unfairly—and falsely—imply that the companies...are, respectively, the sole institutional and home video source for all programs broadcast by PBS.... But [they] are just two among many dozens of distributors of titles broadcast by PBS." Any show seen on PBS, insists IMDA, should be able to make use of this fact in its marketing efforts.

Pacific Arts president Al Cattabiani responds that the logo is essential to their marketing efforts. To carry PBS video without exclusive right to the logo would be "like McDonald's without the arches," he says. Robert Harris and Robert Friedman, copyright lawyers at New York law firm Levy, Rosensweig, and Hyman, confirm PBS's legal right to license their trademark logo—the



PBS head—and to control any implied endorsement, but use of the letters PBS is more ambiguous. PBS assistant general counsel Steven Gitelman agrees with Harris and Friedman that the use of phrases like "as seen on PBS" or "a PBS Video from" are less clearly within PBS's right to regulate. Statements of fact are perfectly legal. The benign phrase "as seen on public television" is unquestionably within the rights of any producer publicizing a work exhibited on public TV.

On-air offers and the use of 800 telephone numbers opened a second old wound between distributors and PBS. Rule 8(e) of the PBS Guidelines provides that nonprofit distributors and producers, as well as public television stations, may make on-air offers using an 800 number at the end of a PBS broadcast. Even so, PBS seems confused about its policies. Although a letter last June from PBS president Bruce Christensen to Teresa Stanion, director of government relations for the International Communications Industries Association (ICIA), makes clear that nonprofit distributors can use a PBS 800 number, Cathy Lykes of PBS program business affairs says, "Distributors can't make offers." The exception is PBS Home Video and PBS Video. Thus, producers must either contract with PBS Home Video or PBS Video, forgo use of the 800 number if they have another distributor, or approach individual PBS stations directly to work out a deal.

Block and other distributors were particularly miffed that Pacific Arts—a for-profit company—was given access to an 800 number. PBS explains that its own affiliates, not Pacific Arts, are the nonprofit companies that provide the cassettes, sell them to consumers, and use them during membership drives. Stations purchase the cas-



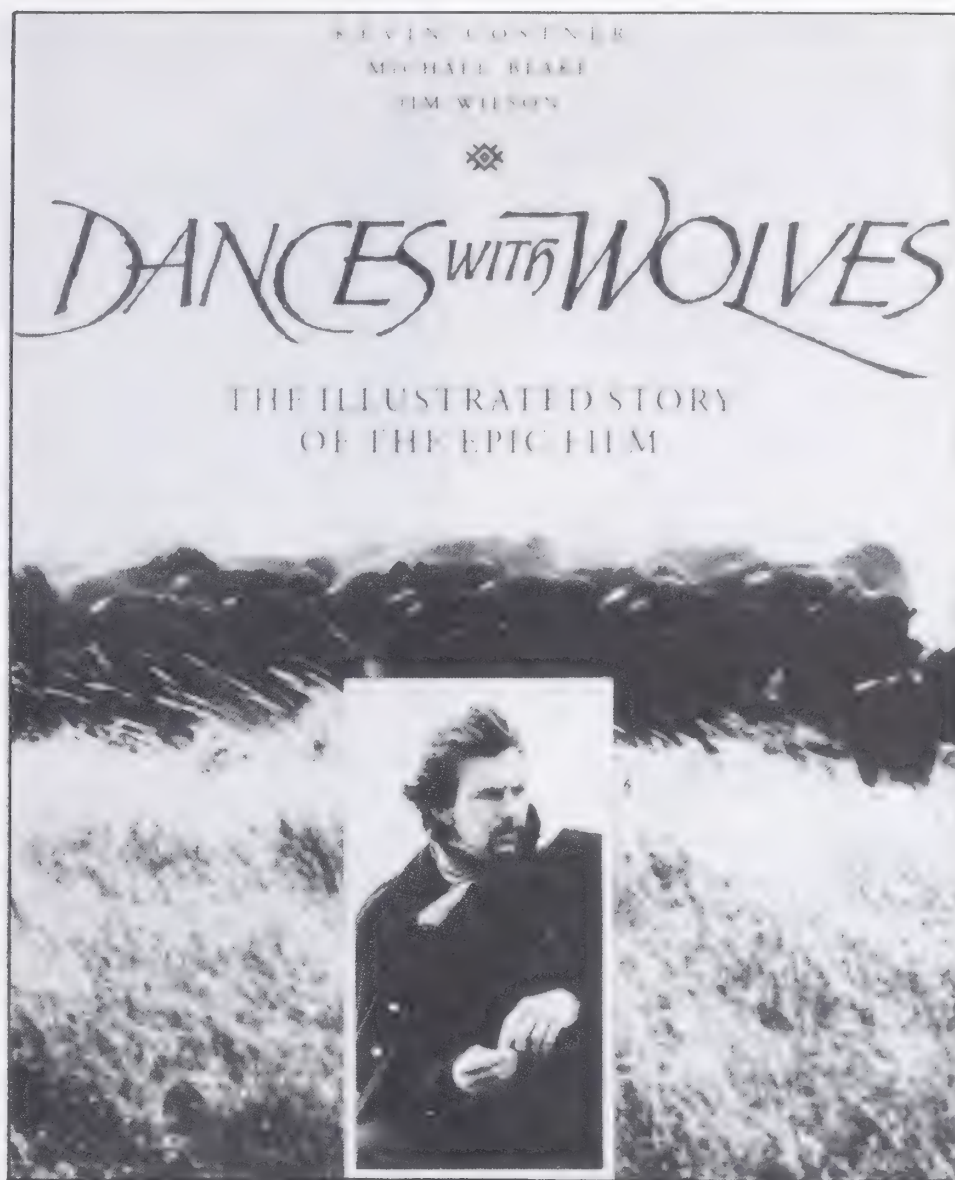
settes at an unspecified "steep discount," reports Cattabiani. But other distributors don't accept the rationale. Stanion says PBS has found a way for affiliate stations to act as subdistributors for Pacific Arts.

In protesting what it sees as discriminatory restrictions, IMDA writes that PBS's marketing policies "deprive producers of the freedom to select their own distributor, [and] they walk dangerously close to extortion." They argue, "Because producers will be less willing to place their titles with other distributors if that precludes their making an on-air offer, PBS Video is given an unfair competitive advantage in the arena perhaps most crucial to a distributor's future: the competition for product." Producers inclined to contract with an independent distributor will inevitably be tempted by PBS's market clout, logo, 800 tag, and capital. Both PBS video operations are doing well financially. In 1989, PBS Video brought in \$4.5-million in revenue and PBS Home Video, carried in every major video chain, met its initial sales projections of 150,000 units after only months in operation.

PBS policies don't preclude an entrepreneurial independent producer or distributor from approaching PBS stations with a similar deal. But if a distributor or producer were to do so, Block points out, they would end up selling inventory to the stations at only 60 percent of the retail price. As an alternative, Block is in the early planning stages of developing a new entity, the Independent Video Information Service. As a nonprofit corporation meeting all PBS specifications, it would offer an 800 number and convenient shipping facility to all independents with work on PBS and their distributors, both commercial and nonprofit.

This legal dispute over 800 numbers and logos is only the tip of the iceberg. The larger issue at stake is the transformation of the video marketplace. For nearly a decade, turf wars between educational and consumer distributors have been breaking out as the two markets blur. And now the marketing advantages PBS's two video outfits offer an additional level of tension as they and independent distributors both vie for the same buyers.

For instance, California Newsreel's Larry Daressa complains that the educational market for Jim Brown's documentary *We Shall Overcome* is being undercut by PBS Home Video, which sells the film for \$19.95. According to Cattabiani, PBS Home Video does not sell to schools or libraries. But there's always seepage. A portion of Pacific Arts' distribution is handled by jobbers, who deliver videos to supermarkets and shopping centers and are hard to control. Budget-starved college faculty rent or buy tapes for a few dollars at the local video store and present them in class the next day. The low prices of PBS's two distributors have also put pressure on other distributors to bring their prices down. Ken Burn's 11-hour *The Civil War*, handled by PBS Video, was sold to the educational market at \$350, while



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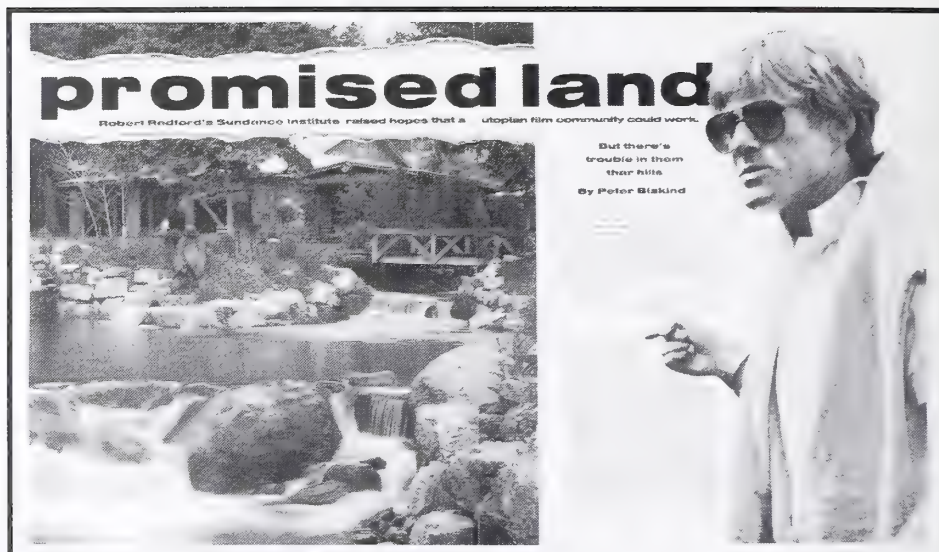
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independent distributors would have priced it at \$250 per hour, says Block. He adds that PBS is also "product dumping," citing a recent offer from PBS Video to the New York State library system that makes any tape from its 1989 catalog available for \$26.

A more pernicious development lies just below the surface of these market scuffles, particularly as the home market becomes more and more lucrative. As Daressa cautions, "The more PBS skews productions for potential home market sales, the more it becomes captive to the commercial market. It's the tail wagging the dog. The danger is that everything will become home video and that the discrete educational market will disappear."

BARBARA OSBORN

Barbara Osborn is a LA-based writer covering the television industry.

## GLOOM LOOMS OVER SUNDANCE

Financial problems, staff layoffs, and allegations of mismanagement have put a damper on the Sundance Institute during its tenth anniversary. According to Gary Beer, the Institute's newly appointed executive vice president, a number of programs have been curtailed because of cuts amounting to one-third of the institute's budget and staff, but there will be no direct impact on the core film programs or the Sundance Film Festival.

Sundance Institute, located on the grounds of Robert Redford's Sundance resort east of Provo, Utah, was launched in 1981 to foster the development of independent filmmakers, writers, and producers. Conceived during the same period as George Lukas' Skywalker Ranch, the Sundance Institute was meant to counterbalance Skywalker's technical orientation, emphasizing instead what Redford calls the "human factor." Independents and industry resource people came together first through Sundance's renowned June Workshops, and later through such programs as the screen-

writers' lab, an annual conference for producers, and the Sundance Film Festival (formerly called the United States Film Festival). Eventually, the institute also branched out to include labs for film composers, film choreographers, and playwrights, plus a children's theater.

Sundance's budget for fiscal year 1990-91 was slashed to \$1.7-million, down from \$2.3-million in 1989. Full-time staff at the main office in Utah now numbers 11, reduced from 15. "Program cuts were in the performing arts," says Beer, who previously headed the institute from 1985 to 1988. "We've eliminated two residencies—one for choreographers and one for composers. And the personnel cuts were all for those programs." The playwrights' lab will continue, but not as part of the institute. Beer expects next year's budget to remain steady at \$1.7- or \$1.8-million.

Although the health of the Sundance Film Festival in January appeared robust, bringing in 26 percent more registration income than last year, spirits were lowered after an article appeared in the February issue of the film magazine *Premiere*, which hit the newsstands as the 1991 festival was in progress. In the article *Premiere* editor Peter Biskind details Sundance's difficulties, which include inadequate leadership, shrinking staff morale, management's alleged misuse of funds, and accusations of conflicts of interest on the part of Redford and various board members. Biskind concludes that an injection of funds would not in itself be enough to resolve the problems threatening the continued existence of Sundance. A "seven-figure deficit," he writes, is not as potentially damaging as the possibility that Sundance "has been compromised by the commercial realities of Hollywood." One such compromise is the breakdown of Sundance's original commitment to independent filmmakers. Independents no longer hold as significant a place on the board of directors as they once did and are now far outnumbered by representatives from the mainstream film industry. And, according to Biskind, the filmmakers attending the institute these days may be "more interested in getting a foothold in

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An article in the February issue of *Premiere* magazine detailing troubles at Robert Redford's Sundance Institute cites potential conflicts-of-interest as the main problem plaguing the filmmakers' retreat.

the industry than in enjoying the ethereal pleasures of Sundance's famous 'freedom to fail.'"

Despite a guardedly optimistic conclusion, the *Premiere* article was not exactly welcome publicity for Sundance. Journalist Jennine Lanouette, who attended this year's festival, saw evidence of Sundance's financial hardship in the reduction of benefits for filmmakers and in the number of parties. Lanouette also talked to a number of festival-goers who spoke of "a depressed atmosphere" because of the *Premiere* article. But while Sundance officials are publicly optimistic about the institute's future, it remains to be seen whether Sundance will continue the same level of commitment to independent film that guided its first 10 years.

CLARE O'SHEA

Clare O'Shea is a recent graduate of the Cinema Studies department at New York University.

## TWO THEATRICAL DIVISIONS OPEN SHOP

The film distributors Miramax and New Line have set up new theatrical divisions. With the formation of Prestige and Fine Line Features respectively, the companies establish separate distribution channels and marketing strategies for what both believe is an increasing US demand for foreign and independent films. These divisions have been spurred on by such surprise successes as Miramax's *Sex, Lies, and Videotape* and New Line's *Metropolitan*. Two figures well accustomed to marketing independent and foreign work pick up the gauntlet: New Line's New York division, Fine Line Features, will be headed by former Cinecom cofounder Ira Deutchman, and Mark Lipsky returns to Miramax to direct Prestige. Lipsky had been Miramax's vice president of marketing and distribution before striking off on his own to form the independent distribution company Silverlight Entertainment.

The rationale behind the formation of these separate divisions stems from a desire to avoid a schizophrenia that might result from attempts to market and distribute simultaneously films such as *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* and *Metropolitan*—two of New Line's releases from last year which obviously require starkly divergent business strategies—within the same division. Lipsky explains that at Miramax/Prestige, "Each type of film has now been given its own home; each one gets the best distribution possible." As both Lipsky and Deutchman reason, such a move is necessary for any serious pledge to specialized films. Both believe such films do not lack audiences, but rather audiences take time to find the films. Deutch-

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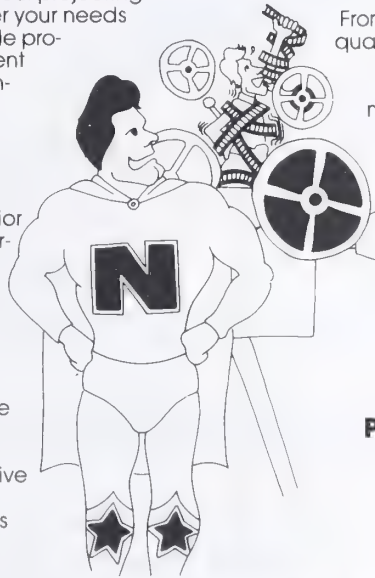
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man expects to distribute five to six films per year, Lipsky seven to eight.

Despite the structural similarities between Prestige and Fine Line Features, there are significant differences in the types of films they are pursuing. Prestige has targeted mainly foreign films: Lipsky expects a ratio of something like 70 to 30 in favor of foreign fare. He is adamant, however, that this should not deter US independents from submitting work. First releases at Prestige include Carlos Saura's foreign language Oscar nominee *Ay, Carmela!*, Peter Greenaway's eccentric fourth feature *Drowning by Numbers*, popular French director Etienne Chatilliez's *Tatie Danielle*, and US director Shirley Sun's *Iron and Silk*.

In contrast to Prestige, Fine Line Features' most important source of product will be US independents. As of February, Deutchman has officially signed on only one film—Hal Hartley's *Trust*, the director's second collaboration with producer Bruce Weiss, following his 1990 production *The Unbelievable Truth*. "Determining which films to distribute," says Deutchman, "will depend on uniqueness and thus is hard to quantify. Unlike a major studio which is looking for the next *Ghost*, our market is quite the contrary. We are looking for the *first* something. Quality has a lot to do with it."

For further information contact: Fine Line Features, 1500 Broadway, #2011, New York, NY 10036; (212) 221-2410. Prestige, 18 East 48th St., #1601, New York, NY 10017; (212) 888-4587.

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## SEQUELS

**National Video Resources**, formed by the Rockefeller Foundation in March of last year, received a nod of approval from the foundation in the form of a \$1-million grant for 1991 ["National Video Resources," November 1990]. In its first year NVR has commissioned and published special reports on video marketing via 800 numbers and fiber optic transmissions. They underwrote the publication of *Independent Producer's Guide to Distributors and Alternative Visions: Distributing Independent Video in a Home Video World*. Projects now underway include a model video rental section within a museum art shop; curating and marketing for the *Green Video Collection*, a selections of environmental tapes; promotion of the home video release of eight features by African filmmakers; and a field study of the institutional market, to be conducted by the Harvard Business School.

**Florida's Division of Cultural Affairs** announced in their February newsletter that "the expansion of the Individual Artist Fellowship program in Media Arts has been delayed due to the state revenue shortfall." The new program was to provide equipment access to independent producers, and was aiming for the eventual participation of the major

film studios in the area ["Sun Shines on Florida Independents," January/February 1991, and "Letters," March 1991]. Despite the setback, program development is expected to continue.



After **PBS and the Discovery Channel** conducted a feasibility study of a joint cable channel, the two parties have put their plans on hold. The main obstacles are the current economic recession and the lack of channel space on most cable systems. Nevertheless, PBS is venturing into what it dubs cable syndication with the creation of PBS Distribution Services. Focusing on local markets, the new nonprofit company will begin by selling programming from PBS, as well as WNET-New York and WGBH-Boston, the two stations involved in the feasibility study.



The New York-based Independent Feature Project has named **Sandy Mandelberger** program and market director for 1991. **Karol Martesko** has been designated acting executive director of the IFP until the appointment of a permanent director this spring. In California, **Patrick Scott** has stepped down as executive director of the Independent Feature Project/West. A search for his replacement will commence after the Independent Spirit Awards ceremony. Frameline, the San Francisco lesbian and gay media organization, has a new distribution manager in place, **Nancy Fishman**.

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## HOMO PROMO

## The Lookout Lesbian and Gay Video Festival

THOMAS HARRIS

The audience knew that these tapes had been made for them. They arrived with high expectations, revved up and ready to see uncensored tapes that reflected the realities and the unique artistic expressions of lesbians and gay men.

Have you ever heard of a festival that featured 18 hours of new lesbian and gay videotapes? Well wait, watch, then...Lookout! Lookout was the ambitious lesbian and gay video festival which succeeded in pulling off such a feat. Sponsored by New York City's Downtown Community Television, the Lookout festival spanned the course of six consecutive October evenings. A total of 76 tapes ranging from one-and-a-half to 75 minutes were organized into 13 thematic programs with such headings as Homo Promo, Fractured Fairy Tales, and Cruisin' the Rubyfruit. Each program consisted of an array of tapes, including documentaries, dramatic works, gay and lesbian magazine programs, and experimental fictions.

Unlike gay and lesbian film festivals held at larger movie theaters, the atmosphere of the Lookout festival was both intimate and relaxed, and yet quite charged. The audience knew that these tapes had been made for them. They arrived with high expectations, revved up and ready to see uncensored tapes that reflected the realities and the unique artistic expressions of lesbians and gay men. Some came because they knew the videomakers or had heard about the tapes. Others came for particular thematic programs. For instance, one person who was contemplating working in the phone sex industry attended the Laws and Skins program specifically to see Andrew Pinter's *Rojo Vivo*, a story of a Mexican hustler, as well as Carol Leigh's *Outlaw Poverty Not Prostitutes*.

In DCTV's large screening room, tapes played on two monitors on either side of a large projection screen. Specific programs such as AIDS Media/tion, Lesbian Autographs, Boy's Night, Color Shifts, and Laws and Skins were decided favorites, playing to packed houses. There was uninhibited howling as diva drag queen Tracy Africa elucidated the virtues of safer sex in David Bronstein's *Gots to Be a Drag* (produced for the Gay Men's Health Crisis series of safer sex shorts); murmuring about "the first female-to-male transsexual love affair in herstory," the central figure in Annie Sprinkle, Johnny Armstrong, and Al Jaccoma's *Linda/Les and Annie*; and affirming with a snap truths told in Marlon Riggs' *Affirmations*.

Each evening during the half hour between programs, DCTV's lobby turned into an impromptu community center. People exiting one program mingled, chatted, and exchanged thoughts about tapes they had just seen with people waiting for the next program. In the screening room, videomakers like Richard Fung, Jocelyn Taylor,

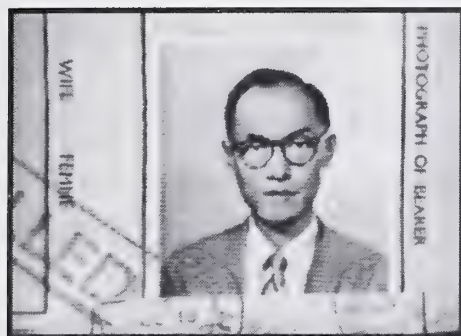
and the House of Color collective discussed their work and fielded questions.

Most of the people of color came specifically to see work that pertained to their experiences and communities. Lookout drew its largest audience of people of color with the Color Shifts program, which was devoted exclusively to works exploring the interplay of cultural, racial, and sexual identities. However, festival curator Catherine Saalfeld's effort to include tapes with a large diversity of perspectives in each program was successful. A significant presence of tapes by black, Latina/o, Asian, and Native American lesbian and gay producers proved quite refreshing. More importantly, this work enriched the festival by providing a diversity of perspectives, and the retrospective of the work of Chinese Trinidadian Richard Fung, who lives in Canada, underscored the importance of these issues.

Fung's two experimental documentaries about inherited identities opened the festival. In *The Way to My Father's Village* and *My Mother's Place*, his latest work, the artist traces both his paternal and maternal roots backwards from Canada to Trinidad to small villages in China. In the process, he explores the legacy of national and ethnic identities, migration, and the simply "ordinary" experiences that influenced his parents' lives and consequently his own. Neither of these tapes, however, explicitly discusses Fung's own homosexuality. However, in emphasizing his inquiry into questions of heritage, he implicitly highlights the complex, multifaceted identities of gay men and lesbians of color—identities formed in a society that is both homophobic and racist. Because these concerns are seldom aired in largely white gay and lesbian media venues nor in the activist agencies of communities of color, a common misconception is that gay men and lesbians are all white. Fung's first tape, *Orientations*, provides a corrective view through interviews with over a dozen Asian gay men and lesbians, who speak at length about homophobia, racism, cultural identity, and sex.

Acknowledging the varied components of one's identity as well as the particular role location plays in the construction of identity is a theme that was foregrounded in many of the tapes by people of color shown at the festival. House of Color's recent *Probe* is based on a series of interviews with gay men and lesbians of color about finding a space within largely white-defined gay and lesbian culture. Early in the tape one character points out that a person of color is "not just a skin color





but a way of being." In Gita Saxena's *Second Generation, Once Removed* the videomaker contemplates her mixed Asian and European heritage, ultimately proposing a synthetic identity for herself. Mona Smith's *Honored by the Moon* explores the experience and the history of Native American lesbians and gay men within their communities and families.

In *Father Knows Best* Jocelyn Taylor explores the dual nature of families: frequently functioning simultaneously as a source of nourishment in a racist society and as an institution that supports repressive homophobia. In a simple interview with her father about his thoughts on sexuality, Taylor presents his homophobic assumptions and beliefs as they enter into conflict with his feelings of love and respect for his daughter. Tapes such as Fung's *Chinese Characters* and Melissa Chang's *You Thrive on Mistaken Identity* delineate the negative images reproduced in racial stereotypes. And Fung's new *Asian Positive* speaks to the relationship between the particular invisibility of lesbians and gay men of color and a community's lack of access to information on AIDS and safer sex practices.

The festival also featured a good number of international perspectives on being a lesbian/gay person of color. Graciela Sanchez' *Not Because Fidel Says So* investigates the repression of lesbians and gays in Cuba. Following the screening of Sanchez' tape, a woman in the audience remarked that it made her "reflect on our situation here and put it in perspective. It made me see the importance of exercising our rights as fully as possible." The festival also offered a number of programs from the British series *Out on Tuesday*, the lesbian and gay magazine show produced by Channel

**Gay and lesbian Native Americans are the subject of Mona Smith's *Honored by the Moon*. Like numerous works in the festival, it explores the multiple components of identity.**

Courtesy Women Make Movies



In his experimental documentary *The Way to My Father's Village*, which opened the Lookout Festival, Richard Fung traces his paternal roots, from Canada to Trinidad to China.

Courtesy Video Data Bank

Four, which featured several segments on lesbians and gay men of color. One of these, Pratibha Parmar's *Flesh and Paper*, is a lyrical portrait of Indian lesbian poet and writer Suniti Namjoshi. In another segment, Sunil Gupta profiles British artist Allan deSouza, a gay Asian man who interrogates sexual and ethnic identity in his multimedia art works.

Surprisingly the *Out on Tuesday* programs were the most poorly attended on the festival schedule. Concurrently New York lesbians and gays were protesting the lack of lesbian/gay programming on local public television station WNET, demanding that the station make a commitment to a regular lesbian and gay show. Therefore, one might have expected the turnout for a successfully produced gay and lesbian television series to be greater. On the other hand, in defending its programming decisions in this regard, WNET has repeatedly cited the scarcity of lesbian and gay media. They would have benefited by exposure to the tapes at the Lookout Festival.

Most of the work in the festival was produced within the last two years, and many screenings were premieres. According to Saalfeld, 50 percent of the tapes selected came from an open call. The mixture of tapes by first-time producers such as Sadie Benning (*Me + Rubyfruit, If Every Girl Had a Diary*) with work by veterans like Michelle Parkerson (*Stormé: The Lady of the Jewel Box*) gave the event both freshness and an edge. Many people were delighted with the opportunity to see the wide variety of work. However, one frequently voiced criticism was that the programs ran too long and that the quality of tapes was uneven. But as one woman aptly put it, "You have to catch lesbian and gay video when you can, where you can, and as much as you can."

Thomas Harris is a freelance film/videomaker who has worked as a staff producer for public television.

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# WHAT'S WRONG WITH MULTICULTURALISM?

## Shooting the System Conference in Toronto

RENEE TAJIMA

Last November a remarkable meeting quietly convened in Toronto. Shooting the System, presented by the fledgling media group Full Screen, gathered over 50 emerging and veteran film/video-makers of color at the Ontario College of Art to discuss their presence in Canadian media production. Contrary to the many multicultural events that have been cropping up in the United States,

ence of diaspora, disrupted in many ways.... Multiculturalism didn't acknowledge the fact that there was racism. Racism then became a word that was never used and it was just culture."

The difference between antiracism and multiculturalism may seem like a matter of semantics, but much of the discussion at the conference zeroed in on the concrete implications of the two. For one thing, the producers of color there simply did not see themselves as benefitting from official multicultural policy. In a city like Toronto, where people of color comprise at least half the popula-

with debate from some conference participants who were surprised that their sensitivity in dealing with other cultures would be questioned—no doubt a reaction shared by the progressive white projectionist. But nonappropriation seems to be a response to unrelenting exploitation by the media. Like in the US, native people in Canada are effectively excluded from creative control over programming about their own cultures.

If the level of discourse at Shooting the System remained high, the practical needs of Canadian producers of color seemed quite basic. Given the traditional exclusion of people of color from arts funding and production, a number of participants had never found the means to produce a film or tape, and only a handful, such as Richard Fung, Claire Prieto, and Premika Ratnam, have multiple credits. During much of the discussion on the first day of the two-day meeting, thoughts centered on developing an agenda for local and national arts funders, which were presented to agency representatives. Several working groups were convened to create proposals and recommendations for the Canada Council, the Ontario Arts Council, the Toronto Arts Council, the National Film Board of Canada, and the Canadian Secretary of State's office. Not surprisingly, the tenor of the various groups' agendas represented a great degree of likemindedness. Conference participants as a whole wanted basic, structural changes within the funding organizations, such as representation on peer panels, affirmative action in staff hiring, access to information, and a voice in artistic criteria and policy with regards to the appropriation of non-western culture, the evaluation of work in different languages, and the like.

The funders who met with conferees the next day were variously overwhelmed by the scope of the recommendations and the depth of frustration—and cautiously optimistic about the prospect for change. What appeared strikingly clear is that any change would be an improvement. However civil the meeting seemed, a productive relationship between producers of color and funders is only in the beginning stages, but members of Full Screen seem to be in it for the long haul. According to one conference coordinator, Cameron Bailey, Full Screen is now gearing up for another organizing phase generated by the injection of new membership that resulted from the conference.

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What's wrong with multiculturalism? It somehow assumes an equality between different cultures that quite clearly wasn't there. Multiculturalism doesn't acknowledge the fact that there is racism.

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Shooting the System was slated for people of color only—eliciting at least some consternation from a volunteer projectionist, who was responsible for the conference screenings but barred from the proceedings. That conflict reflected the mood of the entire weekend. Conferees were set on discussing and formulating their own internal agenda with regard to Canadian race and media in an implicit critique of Canada's new, official Multicultural Policy.

What's wrong with multiculturalism? The conference packet included several critiques of the concept, including an interview with British film/videomaker Pratibha Parmar conducted by conference participant Lloyd Wong ("Fuck You, This is our Home!," *Fuse*, Summer 1990), which outlined the growing debate in Europe, Canada, and some sectors of the United States. Said Parmar, "One of the critiques that many of us had was that multiculturalism somehow assumes an equality between different cultures that quite clearly wasn't there. Instead, there were cultures of dominance and the cultures of different migrant and Black communities that had been, for hundreds of years, colonized and, through the experi-

tion, the presence of people of color in decision-making levels at the arts councils, as grant recipients, and in media production itself doesn't seem to have reached even the level of tokenism. The critical difference between multiculturalism and antiracism then becomes a question of self-determination. Multiculturalism promotes cultural diversity—more television programming on various ethnic heritages, for example. But an antiracist agenda would put cameras and decision-making in the hands of producers of color themselves.

This demand became strongest when voiced by the Native Canadian representatives at the conference—referred to in Canada as First Nation People. Not only did they see their position as independent of the multicultural framework, but also apart from the African-Asian-Latino (immigrant) experience and matrices posed by the other participants. A debate among members of the First Nation community in Canada is growing over cultural appropriation, and some have called for an end to any media productions about subject matter related to native people made by nonnative producers, including other producers of color. Interestingly, the call for nonappropriation met



## STOCK IN TRADE

### Selling Footage to Broadcasters

SUSAN GILBERT

Late at night on August 6, 1988, Paul Garrin turned on his videocamera as a policeman's nightstick crashed down upon him. Sitting on top of a van parked by Tompkins Square Park in New York City, Garrin was on the scene when the police and local residents clashed over a curfew prohibiting homeless people and others in the park after 11 p.m. On that hot summer night, agitation mounted as the police, arriving in increasing numbers, demanded that the protesters leave the park. A blue can was hurled at the police from the general direction of the van where Paul was seated. The

what are the terms of their use. For Garrin, the answers were clear. As he explains it, "That night when I got home, I made calls to the local stations, to the night editors at Channel 2 and 4 telling them about my video. They took a note at the time. The next morning, as they heard more about what happened at the park, they sent reporters over to view the tape. They liked it, so I dubbed off tapes for both, at no charge. I didn't want an exclusive. The first reports were contradictory about what happened. I wanted the tape to receive as much exposure as possible. Pretty soon it aired on every channel."

It was more important to have it air and be shown than to get bogged down in making deals or, as Garrin says, "nickel and diming" news editors: "People should see these things. They should be exposed, because they have impact." To a certain extent, Garrin's intention was realized. Even though the police officers involved were eventually granted immunity, the wide circulation of the news clip forced police commissioner Benjamin Ward to deal publicly with what he called the police officers' "justification for force."

Stock footage sales can force video/filmmakers into an uncomfortable situation. There's always the enticement of seeing your footage in another production—perhaps a feature film or commercial television program. I remember being thrilled when WNBC asked to use my super 8 student film about my brother-in-law's toy soldier company in a profile on him. Despite my training as a stock footage negotiator, I gave them the tape for free, to use as they wished. This instinct may be common, but it's important to remember that these are business transactions.

There isn't a single formula for stock footage deals, only examples of how other individuals and companies have valued their stock. In my own negotiations, I try to find out as much as possible about the production in question, how much footage they need, and for how long they will need it.

The major network news libraries (ABC, CBS, NBC) have price sheets that standardize licensing rates. Looking over these sheets may be helpful in determining market standards. Generally speaking, the libraries establish minimums—a minimum amount guaranteed for all orders. Prices for licensing vary according to the amount of footage used (in seconds, minutes, or "cuts"), the various markets intended for the production (worldwide documentary, corporate in-house, etc.), and the length of the license (e.g., one time only, up to a year, in perpetuity). In comparison, professional

Paul Garrin's footage of New York City police out of control received widespread exposure on local news stations after Garrin offered it to them free of charge.

Courtesy videomaker



rest became video history when his removal from the van, the shaking camera as he's thrown against it, and the swinging of the policeman's nightstick pounding against the camera became the principle image of the New York City police force out of control that night.

Garrin's short clip of videotape soon lit up the airways. It became the focus of news coverage of the riots, airing repeatedly in the New York metropolitan area. This short home video clip carried a controversial message. With local news cameras absent from the park when the melee occurred and initial newspaper reports omitting mention of the police violence completely, the brief videotaped scene captured events of that night that might otherwise have been minimized by the press. The powerful image left little doubt as to what had happened.

Garrin quickly realized he was in possession of a unique piece of footage. At that moment, he faced questions that arise for any film or videomaker who has rare or not-so-rare stock images: who gets to use them, how much do they pay, and

stringer organizations like Electronic News Gathering (ENG) charge a single price for screening and use of their stock images. Unedited, raw video is sold to local TV stations for anywhere between \$150 and \$225 per tape, depending on the length and importance of the story. A header on the tape states that the contents may be used for local news only, in perpetuity. However, any other use—such as on a magazine show or by a network—requires separate payment. Independents without contacts at news stations can sell their video to services such as ENG who have been known to pay \$350 for local television rights.

Prior to November 22, 1963, Abraham Zapruder had probably never considered the potential value of 10 seconds of super 8 film. (Back then, the raw film stock itself was probably worth about a penny.) However, his 486 famous frames of President Kennedy's assassination, which caught sight of the one bullet and possibly two fired at the presidential motorcade that day, has been licensed for as much as \$33,000 for one showing.

The history of the Zapruder family's handling of this film clip is a fascinating story. Two days after the shooting Time, Inc. bought the film from Zapruder for \$150,000, then sold it back to his survivors in 1975 for \$1. While the film is held at the National Archive in Washington, it can only be screened and/or used with permission of the Zapruder family.

Zapruder set definite terms that this bit of film be made available without restriction to the FBI in

their investigation. Use of the clip in any other productions is granted on a very limited case-by-case basis and requires permission of the Zapruder family lawyer. Major news networks, documentarians, and any other commercial venture desiring copyright approval for use of the clip must pay the Zapruders, unless fair use is claimed. According to the family, they only charge for commercial purposes, not scholarly or educational ones. However, they have been known to charge anyone who asks. Their enormous fees attempt to limit producers' use of the images. Zapruder's fear of hearing a Times Square huckster hawking his film and his family's concern about someone else making millions on the distribution of it have been eased by their careful consideration of each request.

While maximizing cost can limit potential use, minimizing it can increase the numbers of producers who will show a clip. Over the past 10 years, GMHC (Gay Men's Health Crisis), Testing the Limits, and the ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) media contingent DIVA (Damned Interfering Video Activists) TV have videotaped news events associated with AIDS and the gay and lesbian rights movements, conducting what these media activists call "countersurveillance to the police and regular news gathering organizations." Coverage of these events is assured, whether or not a news agency decides to send camera crews.

GMHC does not charge exorbitant fees to



outside producers; the price is determined largely by the generosity of the user. GMHC's reasoning is simple: as a political movement desiring public attention, they do not want to limit access to mass news media. Jean Carlomusto and Gregg Bordowitz, who supervise the archive, screen requests for footage. Access is restricted if the video might be used to illustrate a negative representation. When Bordowitz recently learned that PBS's *AIDS Quarterly* planned to use GMHC footage to criticize ACT UP, their request was denied. For most requests, Bordowitz says, permission is granted at a nominal fee.

"We're at the mercy of the network media in terms of advocacy. There's only so much we can do, because we desperately want to promote as much awareness as possible. We accept an exploitative situation. We never give more than they need. They dub what they want and use it as much

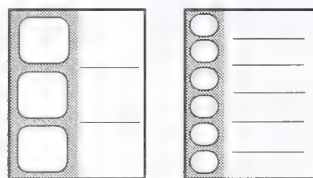
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**Testing the Limits, a video production collective that documents news events associated with AIDS and gay and lesbian rights movements, charges modest fees for the use of their stock footage.**

Courtesy videomakers

as they want. But it's good for us to see footage reappear," says Bordowitz.

Clearly, each "owner" of video and film perceives the ultimate purpose of their video or film differently. Access to mainstream media may be important to some and not at all to others. Furthermore, the goals of independent video or film productions often differ greatly from those of a major news gathering organization. Although providing footage to a news program is not a major statement of approval of the particular story where the clip is used, it may be worthwhile to evaluate whether or not this is something you'd like to participate in. Another producer's use of your material may alter the implications you attach to it or depart radically from your envisioned treatment. While there are the rare examples, such as those of Garrin and Zapruder, where a short scene seems unambiguous and constitutes "news" in its own right, most stock shots are destined to provide filler in someone else's story.

Garrin has developed a somewhat complex ethic to guide his dealing with requests for stock footage. He believes that since news is profit-making, it should be freely distributed for public consumption, including reuse in other forms of social commentary such as video art. In comparison, the video that he shoots belongs to him and is only available to him and to news organizations that will pay a licensing fee. He does not sell to other independents. If they want to use his video, he allows them to tape the television broadcast of it—or, if they missed it, he will dub one of his own copies. He was, however, concerned about a rumor that his Tompkins Square Park clip was used in a Lou Reed music video without his permission or any payment. For Garrin, there is a difference between independent video's low profit use of pirated images and a commercial music video's high profit use of the same.

Stock footage sales can be advantageous to independents in other respects. There's no doubt that the small amount of money made from these sales can be a boon. It will always be in your best interest to know as much as possible about the program that intends to use your stock. Asking for a script or synopsis is reasonable. However, mass media often operates within tight deadlines, and there may be some pressure to make the deal as quickly as possible. In any case, settling the terms of use, including financial payment, and the time period during which the clip can be shown is extremely important.

*Susan Gilbert is director of research for Second Line Search, the world's largest stock footage research and licensing company.*

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## SCENE CHANGE

## Playwright David Henry Hwang Moves into Film

PATRICIA THOMSON

Among David Henry Hwang's current screenwriting projects is a film version of his Broadway hit, *M. Butterfly*. Here, Philip Anglim and A. Mapa in the play's national tour.

Photo: Joan Marcus



For someone with a critically acclaimed Broadway hit to his name, an assortment of prestigious theatrical awards, and a reputation as one of the leading Asian American voices within the arts today, David Henry Hwang has remarkably few pretensions. Just back from Boston, where his play *M. Butterfly* kicked off its national tour, Hwang sits in his new Upper West Side apartment, ready to field questions. But before getting down to business, the 33-year-old playwright confesses to being somewhat surprised at my interest in discussing his move into filmmaking. "I have a lot to learn," he modestly explains. "I'm really on the first rung of a film career."

Actually, this aspiring screenwriter/director has a number of screenplays already under his belt and seems to be heading unimpeded toward what he

considers an ideal career. Says Hwang, "I'd like to do a play every couple of years, write and direct my own small movies, and then write larger movies for other people."

Hwang is slated to direct his first film, *Golden Gate*, this spring. The film is set in San Francisco in the 1950s, shortly after the Korean War. This was a time when Chinese Americans were under investigation by the FBI, as J. Edgar Hoover feared they might act as a subversive fifth column for the "Red Chinese." Hwang based his screenplay on the case of a Chinese American who was jailed for nearly a decade, released, then ostracized by his own community. Despairing and humiliated, he committed suicide. Onto this story Hwang grafted a romance between the man's daughter and the FBI agent who hounded him to death—an idea inspired by *Les Misérables*, Hwang notes. The film will be coproduced by *American Playhouse* in conjunction with the British production company Zenith

and released theatrically prior to its airdate. Its \$4.2-million budget, raised from a consortium of European investors, is the largest of any *American Playhouse* production to date.

Hwang also has a number of screenplays in the works for the major film studios. He is writing an adaptation of Dostoyevsky's *The Idiot*, which Martin Scorsese will produce and direct for Universal Pictures. At the director's request, Hwang is transposing Dostoyevsky's tale of a Christ-like character in nineteenth-century St. Petersburg to a contemporary New York setting. "Instead of frivolous Russian people, you have frivolous art and film people," reveals the writer, smiling mischievously. Hwang's other major screenplay-in-progress is a film version of *M. Butterfly* for Warner Brothers.

Earlier scripts include *Chinaman's Chance*, commissioned in 1982 by producers Midge Sanford and Sarah Pillsbury, who had lined up Hong Kong director King Hu. That project eventually stalled in development. In 1987 Hwang wrote *Seven Years in Tibet*, based on an autobiographical book by Heinrich Harrer, a German-Austrian mountain climber and escaped prisoner of war who became counselor to the young Dali Lama. Written for Columbia Pictures during David Puttnam's reign, the script was subsequently put into turnaround and picked up by Disney. But after three years and numerous rewrites, Hwang is ready to bow out and accept a cocredit. "I'm a little burned out on the material, particularly trying to shape it to various sensibilities," he confesses with a pang of regret, "but it's been an interesting craft experience for me. One of the things it's taught me is that I'm probably more inclined to work on spec—to write my own scripts and, when they're done, see if anyone likes them."

But even with two completed screenplays and two in progress, Hwang is still grappling with the different demands of writing for film. He has gone about teaching himself the craft of screenwriting in much the same way he learned to write for the stage—by reading as many scripts and seeing as many productions as possible. In his estimate, the most significant distinction is film's reliance upon visual images to tell the story. "Trying to make that transition has been difficult," he admits. "Essentially, I had to figure out how to get to the same place that I get in a play, but using different muscles. The most obvious is the use of dialogue. In a play, almost all the information is conveyed by dialogue, and the visuals—such as they are in



theater, which tend to be minimal—exist to support what is written in the text. In film, the reverse is true.”

Despite these differences, Hwang finds certain constants in his creative process. “I begin with a problem, something that bugs me and I don’t know what it is.” When he first sits down to write, Hwang has a good idea of the beginning and end of the story. “I know I’m going from Los Angeles to Nashville, but I don’t know how I’m going to get there. It’s an adventure for me, in that characters and situations are playing themselves out as I’m writing them, in the same way they would be for an audience.” At least when things are going well. “Harold Pinter talks about a deal you make with your characters. Sometimes your characters do what you want them to, and sometimes you do what they want you to. But in order for that to happen, the characters have to have enough of an inner life so that they have their own opinions.”

This approach is complicated when writing an adaptation, as Hwang attests from his experience with Dostoyevsky’s novel, Harner’s autobiography, and his own Broadway play. “In an adaptation, I’m faced with the dilemma of knowing where my characters are supposed to go.” His solution has been to treat the source material much like he does his supplementary research: learn it, then forget it. For *The Idiot*, he read several translations of the novel, plus biographies of Dostoyevsky and Andy Warhol’s diary. But he labored with his writing until deliberately setting the novel aside. As Hwang explains, “It’s been a matter of making that plot present enough in my subconscious so that I haven’t had to deal with it consciously.”

As his work on *The Idiot* and a theater script about the rise of fascism in the US both indicate, Hwang doesn’t intend to restrict himself to Asian or Asian American subjects, which represents an evolution in his thinking. Son of a Shanghai banker and a Chinese pianist brought up in the Philippines, Hwang was raised a born-again Christian in the middle-class suburb of San Gabriel, California. As he told the *New York Times*, “I knew I was Chinese, but growing up it never occurred to me that that had any particular implication or that it should differentiate me in any way. I thought it was a minor detail, like having red hair.” It was not until he was in college at Stanford in the late 1970s that Hwang entered what he calls his “isolationist-nationalist” phase. Living in an Asian American dorm and working with Asian American theater groups, Hwang turned out such plays as *FOB*, *The Dance and the Railroad*, and *Family Devotions*. Nowadays, he is still heavily involved in Asian American issues. He and *M. Butterfly* star B.D. Wong authored the letter to the Actors Guild that ignited last year’s controversy over the casting of *Miss Saigon*. But Hwang now resists being categorized by his ethnicity and forced into a kind of literary segregation. As an Asian American, he argues, he should

be able to focus on *any* subject—including Asian Americans if he so chooses.

Hwang’s most conspicuous influence is the California-born writer Maxine Hong Kingston. In *The Woman Warrior* and *China Men*, Kingston created a compelling nonfiction hybrid, interweaving personal history, real and conjectured family experiences, and traditional Chinese legends, expressions, and spirits. Hwang, who openly borrowed one of Kingston’s heroines for *FOB*, has been approached several times to put some of Kingston’s work on film, but hasn’t taken the bait. “It’s something I’ve always wanted to try to do, but I haven’t come up with a way to do it yet,” he admits. Like Kingston, Hwang says, he is “interested in the coming together of unlikes and pulling together various things that seem unrelated into a more unified vision.” This is evident in his stage-work, from the intrusion of the god Gwan Gung into the mundane confines of a Chinese restaurant kitchen in *FOB*, to *M. Butterfly*’s mixture of American slang, Puccini, and Peking opera. How Hwang will realize his hybrid vision on film remains to be seen, beginning with *Golden Gate*.

When asked about cinematic influences, Hwang ponders a moment, then acknowledges his affection for *Lawrence of Arabia*, *The Godfather*, and *The Third Man*. “They’re all films with large visions, but also conventional structures and narratives,” he admits. But when the topic turns to *Golden Gate*, it’s clear that Hwang has something else in mind for his own work—something more disruptive of formal conventions, as well as of Oriental stereotypes that still pervade mainstream US films. In his Broadway play, Hwang dissected the story of *Madame Butterfly*, exposing the sexist, racist, and colonialist assumptions that underlie this operatic tear-jerker. In *Golden Gate*, he plans to take on the conventions of film noir—including its outdated Asian stereotypes. “Things happen that make sense within the clichés of 1940s film, then someone comes on screen to debunk this,” says Hwang. “These fantasy clichés are fun. They’re also a way for the characters to lose control of the story, like how Guilleimard loses control in *M. Butterfly*.” For Hwang, “This is one way of breaking the frame of the story.” He shrugs and smiles. “It’s a start.”



The mundane and mythic rub elbows in Hwang’s play about assimilation, *FOB*. Here, a restaurant worker is transformed into the legendary heroine Fa Mu Lan, who does battle with the god Gwan Gung, only moments ago a ridiculed, fresh-off-the-boat immigrant from China.

Photo: Carol Rosegg, Martha Swope Associates; courtesy Pan Asian Repertory

# WHAT THE MANUAL DIDN'T TELL YOU

## Audio for Video

RICK FEIST

*This article is ninth in a series, written by staff members of the Standby Program, a nonprofit video access and education program dedicated to providing artists and independent producers with sophisticated video services they can afford. Standby's technicians are artists themselves and therefore offer vital understanding and sympathetic collaboration. Since 1983, works made possible by Standby have been broadcast on the Public Broadcasting Service, as well as European and Japanese television, and have been exhibited in museums and galleries worldwide. The information presented here and in future articles should help you make appropriate technical decisions to suit your aesthetic and budgetary needs. The previous chapters of this editing guide reviewed video recording formats, time code, off-line editing, switchers, digital video effects, titling methods, and video painting systems.*

Audio quality on videotape can be elusive. That editing requires copying from one videotape to another doesn't help. Copying adds noise to a recording—tape hiss, amplifier noise, and other artifacts. Distortion arises from speed irregularities. Analog tape recording systems are particularly vulnerable. Each generation adds to the noise and distortions inherited from previous generations.

The **signal to noise ratio** measures the noise a transmission medium adds to a transmission, or in this case, a recording. It is expressed as the ratio of the volume of the audio recorded to the amount of noise added by the process. Measurements of loudness are made in **decibels**. Based on human perception of loudness, an increase of 1db repre-

sents a doubling of volume. A good signal to noise ratio (60db or more) allows for a clean recording that can be copied without problem. Most VTRs (3/4" or standard VHS) add an audible amount of hiss to a recording (figure 1).

The signal to noise ratio determines the **dynamic range**—the variations in volume (the loudest and quietest sounds) that a medium can record. All audio recorders are restricted in the dynamic range they record. Setting the volume of a recording with the aid of a VU meter will place the level of sound recorded within this limited range. Sounds falling outside this range are lost (figure 2).

Audio recorded with the volume too low hisses like a snake when the volume is raised. Filtering may help, but background noises (and voices) will sound different from the rest of the soundtrack. Sound recorded too loud distorts (overmodulation). Such distortion is audible in sounds that

crackle in a fuzzy distortion known as **clipping**, for which there is no known "fix-it-in-post" remedy.

## Audio Recording Methods

Audio is recorded on videotape in three different ways:

1. The audio is recorded on two tracks physically positioned near the edge of the tape. The analog signals—**longitudinal tracks**—are recorded by the same means as a standard audiotape recorder. The audio record head is stationary, and the voltage produced by a sound magnetizes the passing tape. Since the tracks are recorded by separate audio heads, they can be changed by making insert edits without affecting each other or the picture (figure 3).

The magnetic particles on videotape are oriented for the diagonal scan of a helical head, and longitudinally recorded audio quality suffers. The tracks are narrow, which adds noise. **Wow** (bass distortion) and **flutter** (vibrato added by playback speed variations) will also affect the sound. The overall tape speed of the VTR is critical. A tape recorder makes a good recording at 7 1/2 ips (inches per second). The tape speed of a 1" VTR is 9 ips, providing tolerable sound quality. A 3/4" Umatic deck running at 3 3/4 ips may sound muffled when copied. Since home formats (VHS, Betamax, 8mm) run at speeds as low as 15/16 ips, the quality of their standard audio tracks is not very good.

2. **FM recording** is an ingenious solution to video sound problems. Frequency modulation translates the audio to a higher frequency, which is then recorded by the rotating video heads. During playback, the signal is "demodulated" to the original frequencies. FM recording provides full frequency response and rivals the dynamic range of digital audio, nearly immune to tape hiss (90db signal to noise ratio).

Equipping a VTR with FM recording capabilities changes a format. VHS hi-fi and Betacam SP have additional FM tracks, but regular VHS and Betacam VCRs cannot access them. Another drawback—since the audio is recorded with the video, both of the FM tracks and the video must be recorded at the same time. Insert editing is not possible without recording picture and both FM tracks at once. Split track edits and audio overlaps are not possible.

3. **Digital audio** is available with the 8mm video format. The broadcast D1 and D2 digital

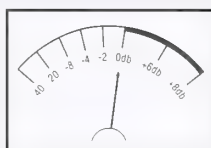
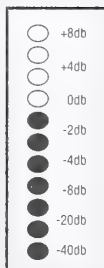


figure 2

### VU METERS

VU meters are the traditional means of determining

audio levels. The recordist keeps the needle from bouncing too far into the red (darker) zone on loud sound. Peak meters (below) are a more accurate indication of volume, displaying the sound peaks instantaneously. VU meters require a moment to react to a sudden loud sound, which may diminish before the needle has fully deflected.



### PEAK METERS

Audio tone is set to read 0db on the meters and is recorded on a tape as a reference for setting playback levels and copying. Recording formats have differing amounts of **headroom**, the space left beyond 0db before the audio

actually distorts. 3/4" and home formats (without hi-fi) don't have much head room and can easily distort.

figure 1

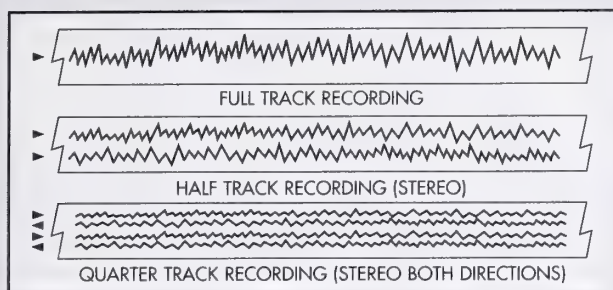
### DB SIGNAL TO NOISE RATIOS OF COMMON FORMATS

standard VHS	40db
VHS hi-fi	90db
3/4" Umatic	BVU 800 48db
Betacam	BVW 40 50db
Betacam SP FM	BVW 75 85db
1" C format	approx. 55db



figure 3

# REEL-TO-REEL TAPE RECORDER



There's another potential 1/4" snafu, which depends upon the number of audio tracks utilized. Full-track recordings are mono, utilizing nearly the entire width of the tape and recording in one direction only. Two-track (stereo) recordings utilize half the

1/4" audio is a grandfather format, in use for over 40 years. A 1/4" tape recorder is found in almost all broadcast edit suites. Over the years, a variety of speeds have been used: 30 ips, 15 ips, 7 1/2 ips, 3 3/4 ips, 1 7/8 ips. Most machines are capable of only two or three speeds. 15 ips remains the standard, though 7 1/2 ips is usually available. Other speeds may not be available, so check with the studio at which you will work.

tape for the left channel, the other half for the right channel, and record in one direction. Four-track recordings record stereo on tracks 1 and 3 in one direction, tracks 2 and 4 in the other. This is the standard. Certain multi-track sound-on-sound recorders are four track, but record the mixdown onto tracks 1 and 2 (instead of 1 and 3). Such a recording can generally not be used in an on-line studio.

video recorders have four tracks of CD-type audio (PCM 16 bit sampling at 44.1 megahertz). The audio is stored as binary data and reconstructed. A data buffer can correct speed errors, like a TBC corrects video. Tape hiss, wow, flutter, and other analog audio artifacts virtually disappear. 16 bit quantization provides a signal to noise ratio over 90db and a wide dynamic range. In spite of such potential, audio mixing and copying in video postproduction studios remains primarily analog. Specialized sound houses, on the other hand, may have digital mixers.

The PCM 1630 format is the digital audio standard used for video, as well as digital audio mastering. The digital audio is encoded as video to be recorded in place of the picture on a videotape machine. Usually, a 3/4" BVU Umatic deck is used, with specially prepared tapes. The 1630 is generally found in sound studios. A double system for sound and picture, such a 1630 cassette will accompany a 1" videotape for laser disk mastering or quantity dubbing. The use of the D2 digital video format (with four channels of CD quality audio) may supersede the PCM 1630 system for video sound.

Other digital audio formats offer a mixed bag of characteristics and quirks. The F8 format (a lower quality home format) also records on videotape. Though originally packaged with a Betamax VCR, it is now used mostly with a Umatic deck. F8 has trouble maintaining stability when interlocked to video, causing distortions and sound gaps. Professional studios generally cannot provide an interlocked transfer of F8 audio to videotape. You will probably have to transfer the F8 audio to a more stable video format for editing and deal with a small amount of sync drift with edits. The R-Dat format records two tracks of digital audio on a small cassette designed for the format. R-Dat has yet to establish itself in broadcast television, and few facilities can resolve the for-

mat (interlock it to video), even if the R-Dat deck is equipped with SMPTE time code.

## Interlocking

The immediate ease with which VTRs record sound in sync with picture obscures the difficult history of the relationship between film and sound. Film and sound mix like oil and water. Film cameras are mechanical instruments, and, originally, the sprocket holes provided the means of synchronization. Optical sound tracks were originally recorded and edited in parallel with the picture—sprocket for sprocket—and then printed on the edge of the film. The optical tracks were eventual supplanted by 16mm and 35mm magnetic film, which is simply magnetic tape with sprocket holes. The machines that record and play the sprocketed magnetic film are called dubbers. The first interlock between picture and sound was done mechanically. Then electronic interlock was introduced, utilizing synchronous motors whose speed is controlled by the 60 cycle AC line voltage.

Audiotape recorders run at irregular speeds. A one percent speed variation is inaudible, but will soon appear "out of sync" to the eye. Recording the same action, a camera and an audio recorder will run freely and soon diverge in speed. Sync can be maintained only by recording a common reference signal on the audiotape. Specially equipped tape recorders, such as the Nagra, record a pilotone along the center of the tape. Later, in playback the pilotone is used for coordinating speed control with a sync reference. Locking the audio to picture in such a way is called **resolving**.

When this system was first devised, the camera fed the pilotone signal to the tape recorder by means of a cable (cable sync). Eventually, finely ground quartz crystals were installed in both the film camera and tape recorder. The crystal deter-

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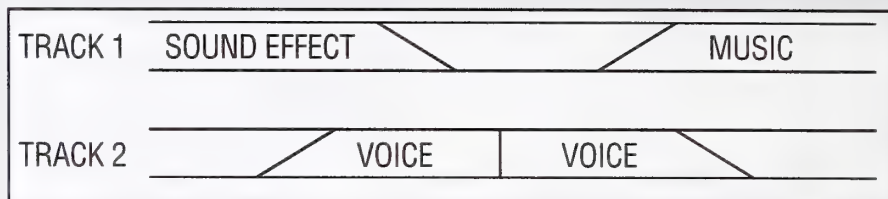
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figure 4 SPLIT TRACKS



Split tracks allow for overlapping audio. Two sounds (e.g., voice and music) play simultaneously. More often, overlap provides for dissolving different sounds to prevent abrupt audio cuts.

mines the frequency of an oscillator, which in turn controls the speed of the camera. The tape recorder has an identical crystal installed that produces a pilotone for resolving to picture. The same pilotone recording can be resolved to a video reference at 59.94 cps, rather than the 60cps used by film, and will remain synchronous with the picture.

Since pilotone cannot be utilized by a video edit controller to align sound to picture with frame accuracy, most recent recorders use SMPTE time code as the speed reference. Such a recording is called **center track**, since the SMPTE track is recorded along the center of the tape. Such audio can be synchronized directly at the film-to-tape transfer by means of the Sync Smart system, which employs a traditional film slate with a display of the SMPTE time code numbers [see "The Time Machine: A Filmmaker's Guide to Time Code," *The Independent*, October 1990]. The colorist enters the number displayed in the edit controller, and the sound "chases" (cues and locks to) the picture as the take is transferred. But with this method, a lot of stopping and starting is involved in aligning each take while paying film-to-tape transfer rates.

Video has a control track that marks each field. It can also be used to determine the frame rate. In a television studio, the playback speed of all VTRs is uniform, controlled by an external video sync reference—**genlock**. The audio on any copy of a tape remains frame-for-frame synchronous with the original. If the copy has SMPTE time

code, the tape can be controlled for mixing and will run as synchronously with the picture as the rolls of magnetic film for film mixing. SMPTE time code labels each frame for accurate alignment by an edit controller. The audio can be realigned to the video any time during the session.

Some audio media also use SMPTE, which does not invariably mean that they can be interlocked in a video studio. Capabilities vary widely. Some studios use 1/4" stereo tapes with SMPTE center track to perform the **audio layback**—the transfer of the finished sound mix to the master tape. Half-inch, four-track tape with SMPTE on track four is still found in some studios. Usually, these machines can be controlled by computers, like VTRs, for frame accurate editing. Although SMPTE is increasingly used in audio production, there are abbreviated, nonstandard versions that will *not* lock to video.

## Mixing

Televisions have ratty little speakers that inevitably distort. At the postproduction studio, sound is monitored on a snazzy stereo system to make you feel better. But you may never again experience this moment of clarity. Immune to flattery, the cheapest speaker is the best monitor of the balance of the final mix.

Some rules of thumb in preparing for a mix: audio is generally recorded on alternate (split) tracks, checkerboard fashion on the edit master in a postproduction session (figure 4). Each track is

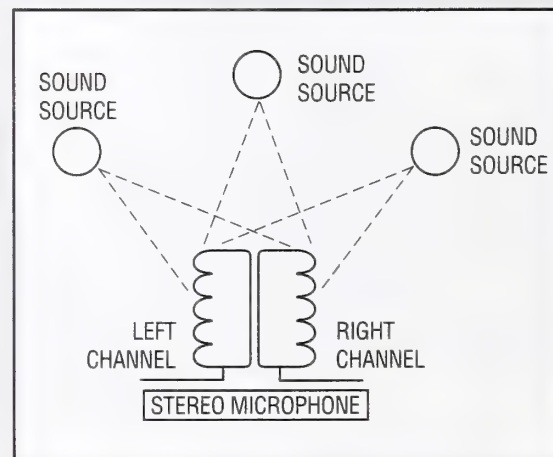


figure 5

Stereo audio is not simply the use of two tracks or two microphones. It is a method of recording and mixing one sound from two perspectives. The "pan" pots of mixing boards can make a track louder in one of the channels than the other, but this does not create stereo. Reverb systems better emulate the depth of stereo by allowing subtle changes in the phase, or arrival time, of a sound and its many overtones and echos.



kept distinct (not premixed), and its loudness can be changed later in a mix without affecting other sounds. Generally, audio is copied "straight across" (unfiltered) during the edit and corrected later in the mix. Two tracks are often inadequate for voice, ambience, music, effects, and what not. In such cases it is not possible to hear all the sounds while building the video, and a decision must be made about how to use the two tracks.

The audio should be recorded loud enough not to add noise. Striving for a balance of levels may be a waste of time. Varying the loudness of music around a voice segment is best done in the mix, not when recording the tracks. Also, establish an overall monitoring (speaker) level, and stick with it. Fiddling with the monitor level creates loudness changes in the master. Since the eardrums of the editor/mixer may also have a limited dynamic range, the volume of sound on tape should be measured by the VU meters, not the current loudness settings of the monitor.

Most projects are mixed at the video studio after the completion of the picture edit. The two tracks are copied to another tape and mixed back with other audio sources on the master. Alternatively, the video goes down a generation, and all the audio is mixed directly onto a new master. Leaving the sound on the edit master with split tracks can cause problems. Improper settings of the audio monitor switch on a VCR may eliminate one of the tracks—and half the sound with it. Also, the loudness balance between the tracks may not be set properly during playback.

Though videotapes have two tracks, most mixes record the same mono audio on both. To work entirely in stereo requires two separate tracks to record each source, making it impossible to edit split (overlapping) tracks when building picture. For a final "stereo" mix, the tracks on the edit master are built with mono audio and later mixed with true stereo sources, like music (figure 5).

Sound studios offer sophisticated mixing capabilities—at a price which pays for their constant upgrading of audio technology. Analog multi-track machines once used for mixing have been superseded by digital 16- and 24-track machines, such as the Sony Dash format. These, in turn, are being rendered old-fashioned by digital workstations. Using hard disk storage instead of tape, a fully configured computer system can often store more than 10 hours of sound. Random access storage provides nonlinear editing capabilities. The audio is not laid in tracks but triggered to run at any point(s) in a program. The Audiofile and the Synclavier (musical synthesizer) Post Pro are equipped with full audio mixing capabilities for scoring soundtracks. With these electronic inventions, sound can now be composed in a fantasy world of editing and design possibilities. For those working with lower budgets, affordable Macintosh and PC applications exist, but if you use these, make sure there is a way to "layback" the audio on the master videotape.

*Rick Feist works for the Standby Program.*

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# BACK IN THE USA

## An Interview with Expatriate Filmmaker Robert Kramer



In *Route One/USA*, Robert Kramer's first US-made film in over 10 years, the filmmaker travels down Route One from Maine to Florida, looking for evidence of the political and social changes that have occurred since the late 1970s.

Courtesy Interama

ROY LEKUS

ON NOVEMBER 2, 1990, ROBERT KRAMER'S FOUR-HOUR FILM *ROUTE ONE/USA* had its American theatrical premiere at the Public Theater in New York City. The standing-room-only screening marked the homecoming of one of the more provocative voices in the US independent scene in the decade from 1964 to 1975. Kramer was one of the founding members of the New York and then San Francisco Newsreel collectives in the late sixties. He subsequently wrote and directed several feature films, all rooted in New Left politics and culture. From *In the Country* (1966) through *Ice* (1970) to *Milestones* (1975), Kramer's features are sincere, moving portraits of "the movement" described from within. Never a diehard activist myself, I recall how weird it was to witness, in *Ice*, a made-in-USA political fiction of urban insurrection circa 1968, complete with an agit-prop film-within-the-film that is forced upon the middle-class inhabitants of a housing project who've been rounded up by the left-wing political organizers.

Had there been any dramatic features so specifically activist (leaving aside more humanistic allegories such as Joseph Losey's *The Boy with Green Hair* or Stanley Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove*) since *Salt of the Earth* in 1954? The only even remotely similar movie that comes to mind is Peter

Watkins' *Punishment Park* (1971). One could point to the slicker statements of the Haskell Wexler-Jane Fonda variety, but Kramer's raw, documentary-like work was closer to the European art films that our generation was then discovering than those well meaning but heavy handed spin-offs of the Hollywood worldview.

Whatever one thought at the time—or in retrospect—of the political positions represented in *Ice*, the film is a piece of compelling, daring, masterful storytelling—made possible by a \$20,000 grant from the American Film Institute—characterized by the same grainy, washed-out black and white aesthetic, which Debra Goldman referred to as "the gray look" ["A Decade of Building an Alternative Movement," *The Independent*, September 1983], as the Newsreel documentaries that preceded it.

*Ice* was the object of much passionate commentary among the various factions of leftist and Maoist film critics at *Cahiers du Cinéma* and *Cinétique*. When Kramer took the three-hour *Milestones* to Cannes in 1975, he arrived as something of a cultural hero. Cannes is held in May, and the previous April 25, Portugal had overthrown its decades-old dictatorship. Kramer went directly there after the festival and stayed, spending two years making *Scenes from the Class Struggle in Portugal* (1977).

When he finally returned to the US, things had changed. The period of political activity that had begun in the early sixties was grinding down into Reaganism. His work in film had always been supported by the movement,



Kramer is accompanied on his journey in *Route One* by Paul McIsaac, who recreates the character Doc, also featured in Kramer's earlier films *Ice* and *Doc's Kingdom*.

Courtesy Interama

but now he had a family to support. No longer comfortable in the US, he took advantage of an offer to make a film in France and settled in Paris in 1979.

He began to work there regularly, thanks in part to the National Audiovisual Institute [see my article on the French television system, "PAF, the French Audiovisual Landscape," *The Independent*, August/September 1988], and above all to his collaboration with Richard Copans, bilingual French militant filmmaker and cinematographer. By his own admission, the films Kramer made in France weren't entirely satisfying. This was a time of personal and professional readjustment, and, though I haven't seen all of the work from this period, the films I did see aren't informed by the same cultural concerns that made his work in the US so unique.

Having written the script of Wim Wenders' *The State of Things* in Portugal in 1982, Kramer managed to get a film of his own produced there in 1987, *Doc's Kingdom*. Along for the ride were his two longtime accomplices from the US, Paul McIsaac (actor in *Ice* and *Milestones*) and Robert Machover, an associate from the Newsreel days and cinematographer on all of the US films. A story of an American doctor astray in a foreign culture, trying to find his own bearings helping the poor, the film is shot entirely with a hand-held camera in natural locations and has the unmanipulated immediacy of his US productions.

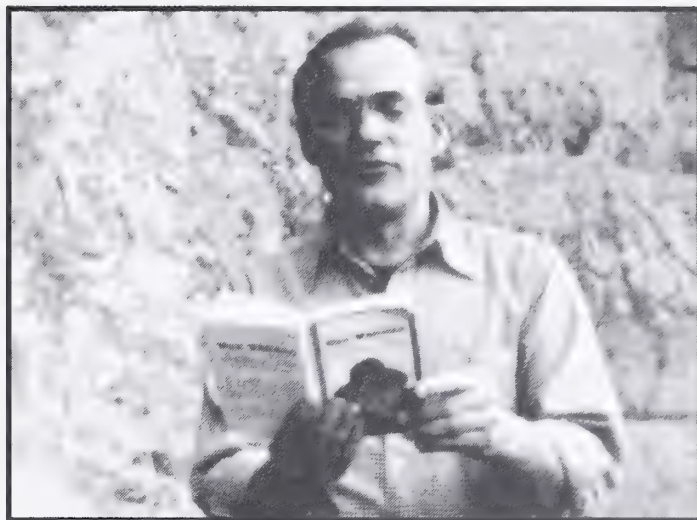
*Doc's Kingdom* played the festival circuit, and after technicalities related to television funding sources were worked out, it was released in France. It turned out to be the bridge between Kramer's US period and his first American shoot in 13 years, *Route One/USA*. Released in two two-hour episodes for French, English, and Italian TV, *Route One* is indebted to the artistry of Richard Copans, founder of the Paris documentary production company Les Films d'Ici and director of photography on the five-month long production. Constantly treading the line between direct cinema and fiction, the film relates the travels of the character Doc, first introduced in *Doc's Kingdom*, upon his return to the US from Europe and Africa. McIsaac again plays the leading role, and the music is subtly scored by Barre Philips.

On the eve of his departure for the New York opening of *Route One*, I met with Robert Kramer in Paris and we discussed his experience as an expatriate filmmaker. The following interview was edited from a recording of that meeting.

❖      ❖      ❖

**Roy Lekus:** What was it like when you first started making films in Europe?

**Robert Kramer:** When I started in Europe, I really started all over again. Partially because the conditions of production were so different. In the States, it was absolutely independent, minimal production. There was no production. All of a sudden, what was considered alternative production here in France was big time production for me, with a large crew and technicians who were actually trained in filmmaking and laboratories that took you very seriously. In the States, we shot the films, we edited them, we saw them through the lab, and we cut the negative. Because we could do it better than a poorly paid negative cutter. Here negative cutting is integrated into the lab process, so the difference in the material base of filmmaking actually changed the freedom with which I undertook my job. It took me another six or seven years to get back to feeling free and authoritative enough to begin to do some reasonable work. I see my first films in France as held back and affected by a different language, a different style of



production, a demand to have a shooting plan, a whole different kind of accountability.

In the US, we'd shot everything on the shoulder, while here, people never even raised the question that the camera could be off the tripod. So I didn't raise the question either. For three or four years I tried to deal with the blocked camera. I used just about every device of supported camera—first of all, I wanted to get a taste of it. I had been making movies for 10 years without ever once having used a traveling shot. There comes a time when you want to know what the vocabulary is. So I did everything—I used the steadicam and the louma, and at a certain moment I came to realize that I was also suffocating. It wasn't my language.

One thing about American cinema is that it's always efficient. There's no time for fucking around. Therefore, this kind of stuff is rarely abused. It's there for a reason: tell the story, get the characters moving. But here, you can spend two days working on a tracking shot. That's going to be a third or a fifth of the running time of your final cut. And it's a big deal. I don't think it's a big deal. I think it's boring.

**RL:** What has it meant to you to make films in France, in Europe, in Africa?

**RK:** It's extremely hard to evaluate what it does to live and work outside your culture. There's no argument that the United States, certainly until very recently, was the absolute center of all my preoccupations no matter where I was and what I was thinking about. I'm wondering whether that's begun to shift. It's been 11 years, and there's a sense in which I'm a transplanted person. I'm no longer, strictly speaking, American, and I'm certainly not French, I'm sort of a mid-Atlantic personality. Maybe that corresponds to something that's happening in the world, about the waning strength of nations and national ideas, or maybe it's just a personal problem to be coped with.

**RL:** What are your thoughts about French cinema?

**RK:** I have no particular feeling of kinship with the eternal themes of variations on love in French films. It's interesting because I usually start from locations. That's very often the first thing that turns me on about a desire to film someplace. Very often the people and elements of a story come much later. I love Paris, but I am incredibly reticent about filming here. I have a really embattled relationship with French cinema, for example. I don't really like French movies at all. I love French cinema from the thirties, when it really had teeth. But for a really long time, it's been a conciliatory and sort of limp cinema. On the other hand, I don't really understand the preoccupations. I'm just not that interested in various variations of love, what I see as romantic or physical love, jealousy, and *ménage à trois*. I have a very limited tolerance for these themes.

One can get swallowed up in it. I did get swallowed. I thought I could deal with the language the way I dealt with English—with the same sort of casual



disregard for a tradition of written language, which is fine in English but which is terrible here. This created a situation in which people would say, "It doesn't sound like French." It took me a long time to understand that the spoken language in French cinema bears no relationship to any spoken language. It is a cinema language, and it's a convention that comes more from the theater than from anything else. It was only when I started to work with producers, who said, "Well, *ça c'est vraiment ingrat*"—it's ugly, or it's not graceful, or it's not charming, it's not witty. It was shocking, because I don't think about things at all that way. I never wanted anything to be witty or charming or graceful.

I got so burned that I didn't want to work in French anymore, or tried to find other ways where I'd get the actors to translate my English. I didn't even write it down, but they would translate it directly into their idiom, only to find that once again people would say, "It doesn't sound like French." I'd say, "What do you mean it doesn't sound like French? That's how that person would say it." And they'd say, "Fine, but not in a movie."

Then, of course, I got swamped by it in my own life, because, like every foreign male, I got swept into this strange territory of French love affairs. Especially for an American lad coming out of the radical left movement, with strict attention to sexism, I found myself on uncharted ground. At first I thought, coming to France is like going back to the fifties, but this is not at all true. When you ask, "What did you learn about living abroad?" all you really learn is about reading the world and about how complicated and fascinating reading the world is, how many things are not what you think they are, and how language is the house that we live in. I know that I'll never understand a certain level of what's going on here. It's not that it's so complicated, it's just that it's hiding behind a veil of subtlety that's culturally transmitted. Actually, Europeans know all about that, because they're living right next to many different cultures. Americans know less and less about that because they're in this isolated hothouse that knows less and less about the world around them. They're encouraged to be less and less interested in the rest of the world, which is the scariest thing that's going on in the United States.

**RL:** What are the effects of living abroad?

**RK:** It's only much later that I began to think about my move in political terms. I began to think about it not as having moved towards the possibility of making movies and making a living making movies but also moving away from what was happening in the States, namely the eight years of Reagan's presidency. Now I see it as a much more organic evolution, where there were real limits put on the growth of people who stayed in the States. There was a kind of savage oppression and repression in the last 10 or 12 years. In a sense, for white people or the majority of cultural workers, this never really takes the form of physical oppression or repression but just slow transformation of values so that, for example, the unquestioned victory of materialist thinking over everything else has just infected everybody and everything I know in the States. People who valiantly fought against it for a time were then just forced to adapt or die. I see it in pretty stark terms, because I've seen a lot of people being forced to think about their lives in certain ways that are objectively unreasonable from outside the US.

This has to do with a certain logic about movies: no matter how much one argues against it, their value is somehow measured by the marketplace. Whereas it's obvious that this is not true, that's exactly the nature of the problem: the marketplace can't measure the value of movies anymore

because the marketplace is insane. On the other hand, that doesn't mean one can ignore the marketplace. It's a much more complicated relationship.

Another result of this logic is that independent filmmaking in America became the making of a product that proved you could do what Hollywood could do for less, and effectively. It becomes your passport to enter the club. These kinds of dead ends seem to me like the result of what I call the oppression and repression of the last 10 to 12 years—no alternative, no freedom to work out other solutions to these problems.

One of the reasons for wanting to make *Route One* was my idea for a voyage from the Canadian border to Key West, travelling a route that ran through all the areas I had lived in the States. I wanted to gauge what had changed. Here in Europe, I couldn't really tell what was happening. But going back was a double adventure, because it was like, "I used to think about it like that, but I don't think about it that way anymore at all." I was concerned that whatever movie I was going to make would be bitter. Angry and bitter. Bitter in the sense that, after all, there's got to be a lot of resentment. I have a flourishing film life, and I belong to a *métier* and a community of people in Europe, but not in the States. Basically, my movies don't show there. I don't exist there. But I have a lot of contempt for bitterness as a small emotion.

The fact of the matter was that I was really open to people in a way that had been impossible 10 years before. *Milestones* (1975) was also a voyage across the United States. But in that film the focus is on inward-looking community formations of that period, on like-minded people who had been spun off by the political movement, who had no home, who were clinging together like survivors on a raft floating down an enormous river. In the whole three hours and 15 minutes of *Milestones* there may be three encounters with "the people." In a certain way, *Route One* is the reverse angle shot. It's "the folks," and we're sort of swimming right in the middle of all that. I took that to be a sign of health that the distance had made possible, putting all these things in place. It probably means I'm less embattled and a lot of that angry and maybe very useful political energy has taken another form.

**RL:** Have you ever considered making a movie about Europe for Americans?

**RK:** Rather than the other way around? I just showed *Route One* in Berlin, where it opened, and people said exactly that: "Maybe this is a movie made for Europeans about the United States." It deals centrally with the European myths about the United States. It has so much involved with showing that the empire has peaked and the dream is at an end.

This brings me back to your question, "What are the effects of living abroad?" These are the incalculable effects. In very uncontrollable ways, I think all the time of who I'm making a movie for, but I think that all those people you're making a movie for, who are sitting on the other side of the choices as you're working, change a lot. Maybe they're the people you live around. Eventually, no matter what I think I'm doing, maybe I'm making movies for people here. You don't make movies for some abstraction, for the entire world or for some world market.

**RL:** Isn't Paul McIsaac/Doc a key figure in the absence of bitterness in the tone of *Route One*? He strikes me as a kind of Studs Terkel figure, sounding the pulse of America.

**RK:** Absolutely. This is a very old friendship. *Route One* is the third film





in a trilogy which starts in 1968 with *Ice*, where Paul plays the role of the leader of an underground revolutionary organization, followed by *Doc's Kingdom*.

**RL:** How did you deal with the question of the presence/absence of character/narrator in writing, shooting, and editing?

**RK:** The backbone of the film is the trip down Route One—a voyage which meant discovery, not planning, which meant not faking discovery. The idea was that the movie would mirror the actual rhythm of the trip. But I don't believe I make documentaries anymore, and I don't believe in anything like objectivity. So the really critical formulation was that this trip was being made by two people: Robert behind the camera and his friend Doc. We developed a style of work very early that tried to mirror the reality of trips you make with other people. I'm interested in some things, but the other person is not necessarily interested, goes his own way, gets into his own things, invites me along to see that, I invite him to see my interests. We'd arrive someplace, and very often we'd just divide up the ground: "Well I'm basically interested in these kinds of things, now given this character of the Doctor, what are you interested in? What do you want to do?"

For example, Doc is not present at all around the fundamentalists. He hated the fundamentalists. Why did he hate the fundamentalists? Because he lives in America. He knows about them, and he didn't want anything to do with them. We actually filmed a scene where he goes to one of their meetings, gets up, and walks out very ostentatiously in the middle of it. On the other hand I hadn't been close to this reality. I thought and still think about it very differently than he does. I'm more prepared to understand the roots of it: how people get there from their upbringing—and I don't mean that in terms of strict religious upbringing, I mean in terms of Americana as well as the pressures of the society and its disillusion. So I just dove in, and he disappears. Once we had this idea that Robert and Doc were making the trip, we still had to find—not who is Doc, because he'd really developed that character for *Doc's Kingdom*—but how is Doc supposed to act while we're shooting? Is he responsible to the idea of making a movie? This means that he has a tendency to become a person who asks questions on behalf of someone other than himself, for the camera; he's an interviewer. Or you've got to find a whole new vocabulary of acting so that he can just be.

And there's where certain technical developments come in: a camera that definitively separates sound from picture so that there are no more claps, no more beeps; everything is time-coded on film. Transmitter mics. I know what Doc is doing when he's in another room. An example of that kind of work is in the soup kitchen in Providence, Rhode Island, where I was free to develop the kinds of things that I was interested in and the sound man can tell me, "Doc is beginning to have an interesting conversation with a woman in another room." I could work my way over, effectively writing the scenario. On paper, I would have written, "wide shot shows Doc talking in the background, closeup of the priest, we hear Doc off, Doc's hands as...."

**In *Ice*, Robert Kramer dramatized the fantasy of an urban insurrection circa 1968.**

Courtesy Museum of Modern Art Film Archives

In practice, I could leisurely make my way across the room to find him in conversation.

We sorted all this out within the first six weeks of shooting, so we had worked out the vocabulary for this movie during the first third of the work and discovered a way to go farther and farther with it. I find very often that it's very hard to even pose the questions before you're in the middle of a problem. It's not like inventing revolutionary new forms, but relatively new forms. It's extremely hard to sit in your room in Paris and think about how this is going to work out.

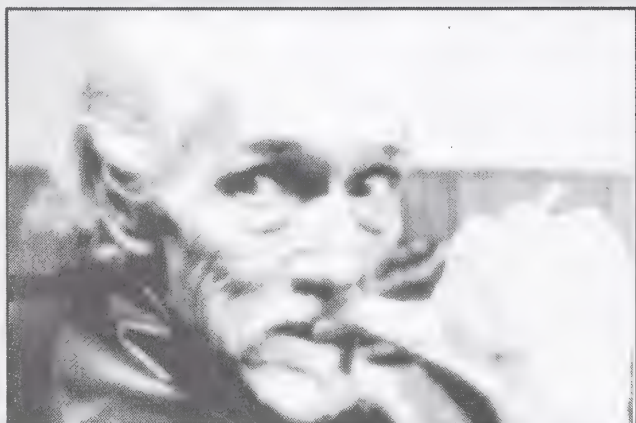
If you look at the written text before *Route One*, the very first five or six pages I wrote before we received funding really give a very good idea of the finished movie with one exception—there's no Doc character whatsoever. When I was in the States I got a call from Paris and was told, "We need another document." I sat down and wrote 25 pages, which read like a fiction film script. In that Doc is the central character. When Richard Copans arrived, he was completely freaked out that we were losing the adventure of the trip and were going to make some kind of bastard fiction film, the worst sort of docudrama where you introduce a character into an environment in order to use the character as a probe to hide the documentary axis of the movie. I didn't want that either.

Later on in the film Doc disappears for a big chunk of time; this was a development that was talked through and worked out between Paul and me for weeks in advance. The idea behind this was a real collision between the footloose filmmaker, Robert—perhaps reflected in the fact that I live abroad—and Paul about the question of social responsibility: who's sticking to their guns, and what am I doing globe-trotting and hanging out in Europe with the artsy crowd when the nation is dying. He doesn't know what he's doing either, but he doesn't pretend to know and he's not running away. This collision is reformulated in the fiction of the movie when Doc says, "Apparently as a filmmaker you can go on forever travelling with this particular kind of relationship to people's lives, moving through their hearts and onto the next heart. But I'm a doctor, and a doctor only has sense in the context of being somewhere and having patients. I have to settle down and I'm settling down." And I say, "What do you mean? You're abandoning me." "No, I'm not abandoning you. I'm just saying that, for my sanity, I have to settle down and I'm settling down." This was an actual rupture in our relationship, and we never got back together again. Doc appears again, but he appears as a "real" fictional character. We never talk to one another across the camera again. This is practically the only time in the movie when the camera seems omniscient, invisible, two inches away from his nose or with his girlfriend in private or going behind his back to his supervisor at the hospital to ask how much he's being paid.

**RL:** Towards the end of *Route One*, Doc, who at one point speaks of being "a healer in a landscape of death," is threatened with being dispossessed by a lawyer representing Doc's landlord. Is this a comment on those people who went into law in the seventies as a means to change American society, only to find themselves in mainstream commercial law without understanding how they got there?

**RK:** That's it exactly—people with the best intentions. For example a sincere, independent-minded filmmaker tries to find someone in the States to talk to about the movie they want to make and ends up in front of somebody at PBS. This is analogous to the lawyer who is now defending some part of Donald Trump's empire without having meant to. That's the





## From *Route One*/USA.

Courtesy Interama

with it with a finished film." PBS actually never really even said anything. To simplify the story, *Route One* is sold in every major market in the world, primetime television screenings in England, France, theatrical openings in Japan. The US is the only market where it's not being shown. The Minneapolis station has been sitting on it for nine months saying, "We're working on it. It's really complicated." I know that it was refused outright by a program called *P.O.V.* I think that Turner TV was much more interested. Every time PBS representatives see it in Europe, at any of these markets, they rave about it, say, "We'll have an answer in...." And then...nothing. A couple of them really loved the film, but their interest just sort of melts. Is it the length?

**RL:** The French have always been intrigued by the American tradition of grappling in very direct terms with the most crucial zones of conflict in American society: Vietnam, racism, nuclear power. Do you consider that there are any contemporary French filmmakers dealing with major social issues?

**RK:** The company that I work with, Les Films d'Ici, has been instrumental in helping to focus what they and everybody else call documentary films. They're interested in films that actually try to come to terms with the world in much more direct ways than elaborate scenarios hiding behind actors. There's also an enormous increase in the volume of production of movies that try to tackle things in other ways. That's quite recent. The problem is that any kind of attempt to come to better terms with the world around us is going to require a lot of formal changes. It's not just a question of the point of view spoken on the soundtrack. It's not as simple as an argument or an opinion that is stated. It's about finding forms that make it possible for a viewer to experience the world differently. I'm not sure whether this new wave of so-called documentary work is really doing that. What it's doing is vivifying the tradition in filmmaking that reflects the position: "The world turns me on, and that's why I make movies," beginning with Vertov. Other people might say, "I love the studio, and that's what turns me on." Both traditions are valuable, but the one about "I love the world and it turns me on" is constantly in danger of becoming lost behind artifice and a commodity orientation, or becoming the false territory of television. For the most part, television just puts up some more veils in another form. So the *documentaire de création* happening right now in France is really great.\* You can see the effect in a movie by Claire Denis, *S'en fout la mort* (*Don't Give a Damn about Death*), which was filmed in a really free way and gets back to the tradition of being in touch with the things that surround us.

I shot another movie in the same vein as *Route One*, taking as a starting point a dance company that's looking for their next dance, while I'm looking for a movie. It's called *Maquette* (*Sketch or Scale Model*). The dancers are one part of that movie but so is where I'm living, and the city of Toulon, and my daughter who's leaving home, and an attempt to bring lots of different elements in life into some kind of relationship. I'll edit it in the spring. The movie goes a step further than *Route One*, in the sense that now there's only the camera and a voice behind the camera. It's difficult to go much farther than that, following a line of subjectivity that envelops completely

same as the PBS executive explaining how the film has to be fit into a slot that is prearranged for a certain kind of production, coupled with all the arguments about defending PBS as the last isolated bastion in a wasteland of television. Looking at it from abroad, from another culture, that's basically garbage.

**RL:** What has been PBS's reaction to *Route One*? Did you offer it to them?

**RK:** The PBS thing is something of a mystery. The PBS thing was like mush.

I made my initial contacts with CPB and PBS when the film was already fully financed in Europe, and I couldn't find anybody to talk to. Producers calling from France, going to the States, could not find somebody to talk to seriously about this project. Period.

The idea was to approach stations along *Route One*. This became so frustrating, we said, "We're not used to being treated this way. We'll deal

\* Over the last 10 years, the term *documentaire de création* was coined to refer, in generic terms, to any departure in documentary style and narrative mode from dominant television reportage and its self-proclaimed objectivity.



## From Route One/USA.

Courtesy Interama

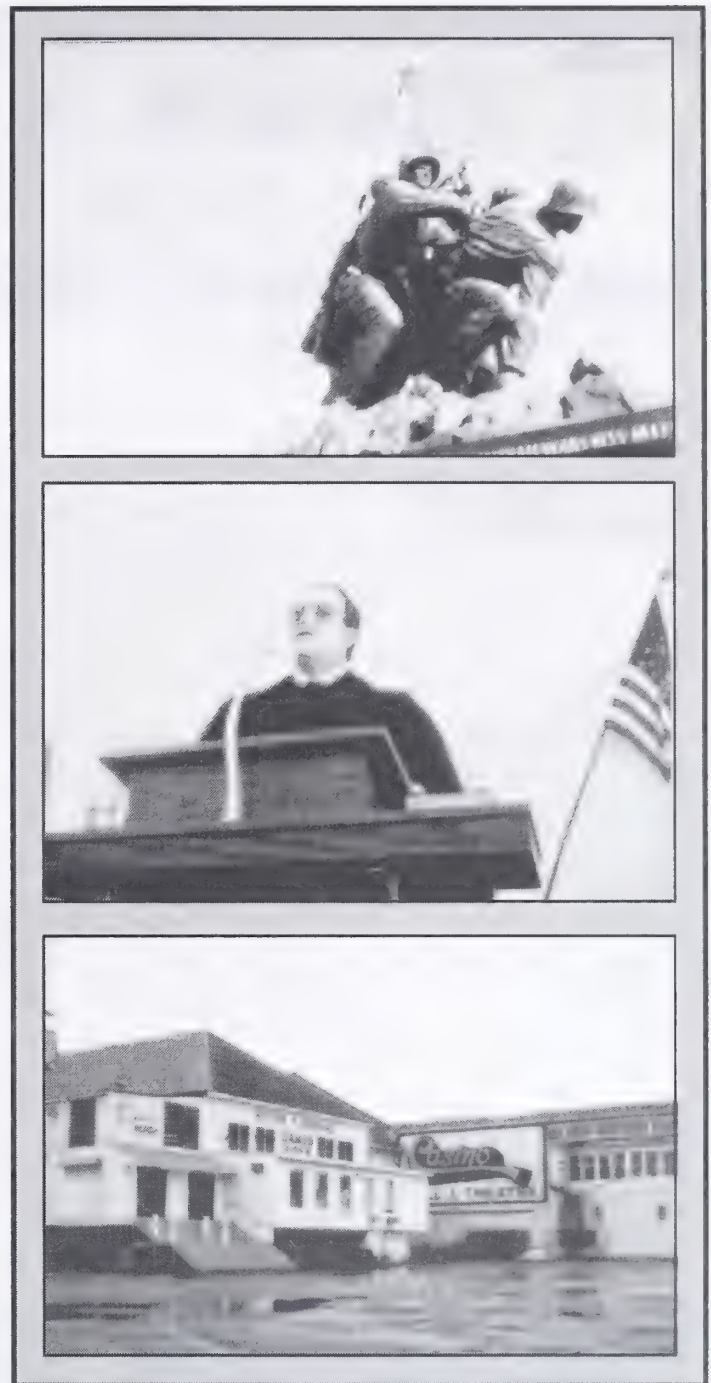
the world of filmmaking and what you're seeing through the lens.

I also had a grant to live and work in Berlin for six months. The first month was almost entirely consumed by a project that was commissioned by La Sept [the French television channel]. They are producing a series of films, each a one-hour continuous shot, a *plan-séquence*. There are about 16 directors around the world who were asked to contribute to the series, which is called *Live*. I accepted on the principle that I had been working in this area of *en direct*, the kind of shooting situations in *Route One* and *Maquette*. The only difference is that I've gotten into the habit of turning the camera on and off, editing as I'm shooting. I wasn't interested in real time, certainly not in the illusion that because the camera is running continuously the record that you have is more real than if you shoot for two seconds and cut it up. I actually sweated blood for a month. At first I thought in terms of trying to find an external situation that was rich enough, that would sustain an hour-long, uncut shot. The first time I shot was on the day of the reunification of Germany. But I kept having the same experience: the *plan-séquence* would start. I would jack myself up, shoot 10 or 15 minutes, and begin to feel I was wading through the most boring, awful, unnecessary passage of video. Then I would turn off the thing and go home. Or I would turn off my camera and start really shooting—in pieces. It was the pieces that actually attracted me, because more and more it's compression and juxtaposition that I'm interested in—the explosion that starts to come when you push things up against one another in unexpected ways. A lot of *Route One* is built that way.

**RL:** One thinks one's in a scene at Fort Bragg, then we're with Pat Reese and the transvestite, and all of a sudden we're back at Fort Bragg.

**RK:** It's so clear that our subjective experience is so rich compared to the art forms we're given to look at. Most movies are linear, and our own subjective experience isn't linear at all; it's back and forth memory, imagining the future, the present. Finally Berlin had a tremendous effect on me. It was like going home, and yet I had never been there before. This had a lot to do with the effect of German culture on an entire generation of American Jews, and New York in the fifties. I actually realized that I had gone through all this once before in my life, analyzed why Thomas Mann was so important in my household, why I didn't like to go to the Philharmonic—plus being confronted with the Holocaust, things I had not dealt with at all. Also the crumbling of a whole body of ideas in the East which had had real, material importance in my life. The intersection was incredibly rich.

I realized that I shouldn't be making a film about something outside of myself. I should be finding some kind of a way to make a film about this turmoil, this confusion, this love-hate thing with Berlin. There, compared to France before, I was confronted with a culture that constantly makes me want to film, to talk, where I feel an enormous tension and all of a sudden a hole of incomprehension about how it led from these ideas to that reality of horror. You find places like the very beautiful building called the Gropius Bau, designed by the Bauhaus architect Walter's grandfather, next to the preserved cellars of the torture chambers of the Gestapo. You can pan down from the building to the cellars. Well, in fact, you can't—that's the point—you've got to cut. That was another of my *plans-séquences* which was impossible to film. Finally I took all these pieces of *plans-séquences*, plus other things and cut a one-hour movie. I put a television in an enormous tiled bathroom that resembled the basement of the Gestapo headquarters, and I refilmed the television and myself for an hour. *C'est pas mal*. I'm talking the



whole time about the TV, and I'm also talking on the TV. Sometimes I'm behind the camera talking to me, the person who's talking behind the camera on the TV. Sometimes the camera is fixed, and I talk into it as directly as I can.

I think this may be the end of the road here—an attempt to feel comfortable talking during your own movie, which is like an essay, a European film form that I have a great deal of admiration for and have never been able to feel comfortable with and couldn't do yet. In *Maquette* I really wanted to make the camera a subtle and comfortable extension of myself talking to people, almost all head on: Robert behind the camera and someone in front of the camera, a very specific relationship. With the Berlin movie, it's out from behind the camera. I think the line of development ends there, and I need to go do some fiction filmmaking to start all over again.

*Roy Lekus is an expatriate American filmmaker living in Paris who is also returning to the US to produce a film.*



# Black Macho Revisited

## REFLECTIONS OF A SNAP! QUEEN

MARLON RIGGS

**N**EGRO FAGGOTRY IS IN FASHION.

SNAP!

Turn on your television and camp queens greet you in living color.

SNAP!

Turn to cable and watch America's most bankable modern minstrel expound on getting "fucked in the ass" or his fear of faggots.

SNAP!

Turn off the TV, turn on the radio: rotund rapper Heavy D, the self-styled "overweight lover MC," expounds on how *his* rap will make you "happy like a faggot in jail." Perhaps to pre-empt questions about how he would know—you might wonder what kind of "lover" he truly is—Heavy D reassures us that he's just "extremely intellectual, not bisexual" (*BLK*, March 1990).

Jelly-roll SNAP!

Negro Faggotry *is* in vogue. Madonna commodified it into a commercial hit. Mapplethorpe photographed it and art galleries drew fire and record crowds in displaying it. Black macho movie characters dis?—or should we say dish?—their antagonists with unkind references to it. Indeed references to, and representations of, Negro Faggotry seem a rite of passage among contemporary Black male rappers and filmmakers. Observe the pageantry:

Snap-swish-and-dish divas have truly arrived, giving beauty shop drama center stage, performing the read-and-snap two-step as they sashay across the movie screen, entertaining us in the castles of our homes—like court jesters, like eunuchs—with their double entendres and dead-end lusts, and above all, their relentless hilarity in the face of relentless despair. Negro Faggotry is the rage! Black Gay men are not. For in the cinematic and television images of and from Black America as well as the words of music and dialogue which now abound and *seem* to address my life as a Black Gay Man, I am struck repeatedly by the determined, unreasoning, often irrational desire to discredit my claim to Blackness and hence to Black manhood.

In consequence the terrain Black Gay men navigate in the quest for self and social identity is, to say the least, hostile. What disturbs—no, enrages—me is not so much the obstacles set before me by whites, which history conditions me to expect, but the traps and pitfalls planted by my so-called brothers, who because of the same history should know better.

I am a Negro Faggot, if I believe what movies, TV, and rap music say of me. My life is game for play. Because of my sexuality, I cannot be Black. A strong, proud, "Afrocentric" Black man is resolutely heterosexual, not *even* bisexual. Hence I remain a Negro. My sexual difference is considered of no value; indeed it's a testament to weakness, passivity, the absence of real guts—balls. Hence I remain a sissy, punk, faggot. I cannot be a Black Gay Man because by the tenets of Black Macho, Black Gay Man is a triple negation. I am consigned, by these tenets, to remain a Negro Faggot. And as such I am game for play, to be used, joked about, put down, beaten, slapped, and bashed, not just by illiterate homophobic thugs in the night, but by Black American culture's best and brightest.





In a community where the dozens, signifying, dis'ing, and *dishing* are revered as art form, I ask myself: What does this obsession with Negro Faggotry signify? What is its significance?

What lies at the heart, I believe, of Black America's pervasive cultural homophobia is the desperate need for a convenient Other *within* the community, yet not truly *of* the community, an Other onto which blame for the chronic identity crises afflicting the Black male psyche can be readily displaced, an indispensable Other which functions as the lowest common denominator of the abject, the base line of transgression beyond which a Black man is no longer a man, no longer Black, an essential Other against which Black men and boys maturing, struggling with self-doubt, anxiety, feelings of political, economic, social, and sexual inadequacy—even impotence—can always measure themselves and by comparison seem strong, adept, empowered, superior.

Indeed the representation of Negro Faggotry disturbingly parallels and reinforces America's most entrenched racist constructions around African American identity. White icons of the past signifying "Blackness" share with contemporary icons of Negro Faggotry a manifest dread of the deviant Other. Behind the Sambo and the Snap Queen lies a social psyche in torment, a fragile psyche threatened by deviation from its egocentric/ethnocentric construct of self and society. Such a psyche systematically defines the Other's "deviance" by the essential characteristics which make the Other distinct, then invests those differences with intrinsic defect. Hence: Blacks are inferior because they are not white. Black gays are unnatural because they are not straight. Majority representation of both affirm the view that Blackness and gayness constitute a fundamental rupture in the order of things, that our very existence is an affront to nature and humanity.

For Black Gay men, this burden of (mis)representation is compounded. We are saddled by historic caricatures of the Black Male, now fused with newer notions of the Negro Faggot. The resultant dehumanization is multi-layered and profound.

What strikes me as most insidious, and paradoxical, is the degree to which popular African American depictions of us as Black Gay men so

keenly resonate in American majority depictions of us, as Black people. Within the Black Gay community, for example, the Snap! contains a multiplicity of coded meanings: as in—SNAP!—"Got your point!" Or—SNAP!—"Don't even try it." Or—SNAP!—"You *fierce*!" Or—SNAP!—"Get out of my face." Or—SNAP!—"Girlfriend, pleeese." The snap can be as emotionally and politically charged as a clenched fist, can punctuate debate and dialogue like an exclamation point, a comma, an ellipsis, or altogether negate the need for words among those who are adept at decoding its nuanced meanings.

But the particular appropriation of the snap by Hollywood's Black Pack deflates the gesture into rank caricature. Instead of a symbol of communal expression and, at times, cultural defiance, the snap becomes part of a simplistically reductive Negro Faggot identity: it functions as a mere signpost of effeminate, cute, comic homosexuality. Thus robbed of its full political and cultural dimension, the snap, in this appropriation, descends to stereotype.

Is this any different from the motives and consequences associated with the legendary white dramatist T.D. Rice, who more than 150 years ago appropriated the tattered clothes and dance style of an old crippled Black man, then went on stage and imitated him, thus shaping in the popular American mind an indelible image of Blacks as simplistic and poor yet given, without exception, to "natural" rhythm and happy feet?

A family tree displaying dominant types in the cultural iconography of Black men would show, I believe, an unmistakable line of descent from Sambo to the Snap Queen, and in parallel lineage, from the Brute Negro to the AIDS-infected Black Homo-Con-Rapist.

What the members of this pantheon share in common is an extreme displacement and distortion of sexuality. In Sambo and the Snap Queen sexuality is repressed, arrested. Laughter, levity, and a certain child-like disposition cement their mutual status as comic eunuchs. Their alter egos, the Brute Black and the Homo Con, are but psychosocial projections of an otherwise tamed sexuality run amuck, bestial, promiscuous, pathological.

Contemporary proponents of Black macho thus converge with D.W. Griffith in their cultural practice, deploying similar devices towards similarly dehumanizing ends. In their constructions of "unnatural" sexual aggression, the infamous chase scene in *Birth of a Nation* displays a striking aesthetic kinship to the homophobic jail rap—or should I say, attempted rape?—in Reginald and Warrington Hudlin's *House Party*.

The resonances go deeper.

Pseudo-scientific discourse fused with popular icons of race in late-nineteenth-century America to project a social fantasy of Black men, not simply as sexual demons, but significantly, as intrinsically corrupt. Diseased, promiscuous, destructive—of self and others—our fundamental nature, it was widely assumed, would lead us to extinction.

Against this historical backdrop consider the highly popular comedy routines of Eddie Murphy, which unite Negro Faggotry, "Herpes Simplex 10"—and AIDS—into an indivisible modern icon of sexual terrorism. Rap artists and music videos resonate with this perception, fomenting a social psychology that blames the *victim* for his degradation and death.

The sum total of prime-time fag pantomimes, camp queens as culture critics, and the proliferating bit-part swish-and-dish divas who, like ubiquitous Black maids and butlers in fifties Hollywood films, move along the edges of the frame, seldom at the center, manifests the persistent psychosocial impulse toward control, displacement, and marginalization of the Black Gay Other. This impulse, in many respects, is no different than the phobic, distorted projections which motivated blackface minstrelsy.

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**Opposite left:** In *Living Color*'s popular "Men on Film" skit features two sharp-tongued, frivolous, often buffoonish SNAP! queens.

**Opposite right:** A confrontation in Michael Schultz' *Car Wash* culminates in the following exchange:

**Militant revolutionary:** Would you please get outta my face, you sorry looking faggot.

**Queen:** Who you calling sorry looking?

[Others laugh]

**Militant:** Can't you all see that she ain't funny? She's just another poor example of how the system has of destroying our men.

**Queen:** I am more man than you'll ever be and more woman than you'll ever get. [Snap!]





This is the irony: there are more Black male filmmakers and rap artists than ever, yet their works display a persistently narrow, even monolithic construction of Black male identity.

"You have to understand something," explained Professor Griff of the controversial and highly popular rap group Public Enemy in an interview. "In knowing and understanding black history, African history, there's not a word in any African language which describes homosexual, y'understand what I'm saying? You would like to make them part of the community, but that's something brand new to black people."

And so Black Macho appropriates African history, or rather, a deeply reductive, mythologized view of African history, to rationalize homophobia. Pseudo-academic claims of "Afrocentricity" have now become a popular invocation when Black Macho is pressed to defend its essentialist vision of the race. An inheritance from Black Cultural Nationalism of the late sixties, and Negritude before that, today's Afrocentrism, as popularly theorized, premises an historical narrative which runs thus: Before the white man came, African men were strong, noble, protectors, providers, and warriors for their families and tribes. In pre-colonial Africa, men were truly men. And women—were women. Nobody was lesbian. Nobody was feminist. Nobody was gay.

This distortion of history, though severe, has its seductions. Given the increasingly besieged state of Black men in America, and the nation's historic subversion of an affirming Black identity, it is no wonder that a community would turn to pre-Diasporan history for metaphors of empowerment. But the embrace of the African warrior ideal—strong, protective, impassive, patriarchal—has cost us. It has set us down a perilous road of cultural and spiritual redemption, and distorted or altogether disappeared from historical record the multiplicity of identities around color, gender, sexuality, and class, which inform the African and African American experience.

It is to me supremely revealing that in Black Macho's popular appropriation of Malcolm X (in movies, music, rap videos) it is consistently Malcolm *before Mecca*—militant, Macho, "by any means necessary" Malcolm—who is quoted and idolized, not Malcolm *after Mecca*, when he became more critical of himself and exclusivist Nation of Islam tenets, and embraced a broader, multicultural perspective on nationalist identity.

By the tenets of Black Macho, true masculinity admits little or no space for self-interrogation or multiple subjectivities around race. Black Macho prescribes an inflexible ideal: strong Black men—"Afrocentric" Black men—don't flinch, don't weaken, don't take blame or shit, take charge,

Above left: Eddie Murphy: Faggots aren't allowed to look at my ass while I'm up here. That's why I keep moving while I'm up here. You don't know where the faggot section is, so you gotta keep moving. So if they do see it, it's quick and you switch. They don't get no long stare at your shit.

Above right: The rivalry between political activists and the Gamma Phi Gamma fraternity in Spike Lee's *School Daze* reaches the boiling point when the politicians taunt the Gammaites with the chant: "Gamma/Gamma/Gamma/Fag/Fag/Fag/Fag."

step-to when challenged, and defend themselves without pause for self-doubt.

Black Macho counterpoises this warrior model of masculinity with the emasculated Other: the Other as punk, sissy, Negro Faggot, a status with which any man, not just those who, in fact, are gay, can be and are branded should one deviate from rigidly prescribed codes of hypermasculine conduct.

"When I say Gamma, you say Fag. Gamma. Fag. Gamma. Fag." In the conflict between the frat boys and the "fellas" in Spike Lee's *School Daze*, verbal fag-bashing becomes the weapon of choice in the fellas' contest for male domination. In this regard Lee's movie not only resonates a poisonous dynamic in contemporary Black male relations, but worse, Lee glorifies it.

Spike Lee and others like him count on the complicit silence of those who know better, who know the truth of their own lives as well as the diverse truths which inform the total Black experience.

Notice is served.

Our silence has ended.

SNAP!

Marlon Riggs teaches in the Graduate School of Journalism at the University of California/Berkeley. His videotapes include *Anthem*, *Affirmations*, *Tongues Untied*, and the Emmy-award winning *Ethnic Notions*.

This essay was first delivered as a talk at the conference "African-American Film and Media Culture: A Re-Examination" at the Whitney Museum of American Art in June 1990. It will be published in *Brother to Brother: New Writings by Black Gay Men*, edited by Essex Hemphill (Boston: Alyson Publications, 1991), and in *Black American Literature Forum* (May 1991), a special issue on Black film edited by Camille Billops, Valerie Smith, and Ada Gay Griffin.



"As we are in the first generation to face a world which our race will not continue by virtue of nuclear annihilation, we are orphans cast against a blank future." That is how videomaker Terese Svoboda describes **Orphans**, her new 21-minute tape which attempts to mythologize that legacy. In *Orphans*, a fortune teller is seduced by the devil in order to turn the end of the world, Mobius strip-like, into the Garden of Eden. Shot on the Lower East Side of New York City, the video features Terence Mann, William Raymond, and Caroline Simonds, with music by Anne LeBaron. Svoboda shot *Orphans* on Betacam and completed post-production through the Standby and On-Line programs at Editel and Magno. *Orphans* received funding from the New York State Council on the Arts, the Jerome Foundation, Studio Pass, and Cast Iron TV, and premiered last fall in Harvestworks' *Listen In* series. *Orphans*: Svoboda/Bull Productions, 56 Ludlow, New York, NY 10002.

Over a decade after his assassination, the late, great San Francisco supervisor Harvey Milk is the subject of a new documentary. **Hymn for Harvey**, a 28-minute tape by Glenn Davis, Robert Orban, and Joe Soto of DSO productions in San Francisco, is described as a docu-art piece. In it, Bob Ross, publisher of the country's largest gay weekly; Randy Shilts, author of *And the Band Played On* and *The Mayor of Castro Street*; and Harry Britt, president of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, recall Milk's life and look at the gay rights movement as it evolved since his death. One previously unheard interview features Milk offering his views on political and personal morality in the gay community and the world at large. *Hymn for Harvey*: DSO Productions, 601 Van Ness Ave., Ste. E 3425, San Francisco, CA 94102; (415) 775-9785.

New York-based videomaker Douglas Eisenstark has released two new works. **Leonardo: The Mind of the Painter** is an 18-minute, experimental piece about the artist/scientist in the year 1501, when scientific exploration dominated his time. Today, Leonardo Da Vinci defines the "Renaissance man," but in his own time, he stood at the nexus of the social and political forces that we are now redefining. *Leonardo* was shot in super VHS in Yugoslavia, Germany, and Italy, with actors Peter and Sonya Melocco and Karmen Poropat. Eisenstark composed the original music for the tape with Maurizio Najt, which was recorded at Harmonic Ranch by Brook Williams and Laura Hirshberg. Funding for *Leonardo* was provided by the Jerome Foundation. Eisenstark has also completed a 90-minute compilation of his short experimental and documentary films and videos from the years 1975-90, entitled **Partial Listing**. The compilation reel includes clips from *A True Country*, an experimental tape shot in Peru; the documentary *Food Chains*, about food

coops in Chicago; *Blockade* and *Trident*, two anti-nuclear newsreels; and *We Have to Link*, about Third World organizing at the June 12, 1982 Rally for Disarmament. *Leonardo: The Mind of the Painter* and *Partial Listing*: Douglas Eisenstark, 58 Ludlow, New York NY 10002.

AIVF member Catherine Russo has just completed **Fedefam**, a 40-minute video focusing on the 100,000 people who have "disappeared" at the hands of the military and death squads throughout Latin America. The heroes of this documentary are the families who have organized them-



At the beginning of this century, Robert Henri led the Ash Can School of painters out of the studio and into the lower-class city streets. His art and life are the subject of a new film biography by Lori Maass and John Spence.

Courtesy filmmakers

selves into a force to challenge these regressive regimes and educate the international community about the causes of the disappearance of their loved ones. Russo and coproducer Carlotta Chartier shot some of the footage at a conference of these families when they met in El Salvador. They then travelled throughout Latin America, gathering footage from the organizations representing families of the disappeared. *Fedefam* was made possible by the American Film Institute, the National Council of the Churches, and the New England Film/Video Fellowship Fund. *Fedefam*: Women Make Movies, 225 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10012.

A new half-hour documentary, **Robert Henri and the Art Spirit**, about the painter, teacher, and activist, has just been completed by writer/producer Lori Maass and cinematographer/editor John Spence. Robert Henri was the leader of the so-called Ash Can School, which challenged the traditional styles and subject matter of American painting in the first decade of this century. With Henri at the helm, the group helped open the stagnant exhibition system to independent artists. Henri's students included Edward Hopper, Rockwell Kent, Ariel Durant, Leon Trotsky, and Clifton Webb. He was also author of the classic *The Art Spirit*. Maass and Spence's film biography includes historical photographs, paintings, drawings, and on-location footage to build a portrait of Henri's career and artistic development. Funding came from the Nebraska Humanities Council, the Cooper Foundation, the John Sloan Memorial Foundation, the Nebraska Arts Council, the Robert Henri Museum, and others. *Robert Henri and the Art Spirit*: Spence Film Production, 3141 Holdrege, Lincoln, NE 68503; (402)476-2683.

Veteran film- and videomaker Ayoka Chen-zira is seeking production funding to complete her first feature, **In All My Born Days**. Shot in a Harlem brownstone, the film tells the poignant and humorous coming-of-age story of Rainbow Gold, the spirited daughter of the stern but loving Alma Gold. Rainbow's relationship with her pubescent peers, mother, and a recently returned "Gypsy" aunt are confusing enough. Then Alma, a widowed single parent and small business owner, meets a new man. And Ruby Gold, Alma's sister and former dance partner, sashays back into their lives after many years of performing in Europe, further upsetting the Gold household. To complete the film, which began principal photography last summer, Chenzira and the not-for-profit resource organization Production Partners for Black and Latino Images are seeking tax-deductible contributions. *In All My Born Days*: Production Partners, 17 E. 17th St., 7th fl., New York, NY 10003; (212)675-3000; fax: (212)675-3275.

AIVF member Julie Gal has just completed **The Road to Peace**, an hour-long documentary that examines the role of Shimon Peres, described as "a hawk turned diplomatic dove," in shaping the future of Israel. The film looks at Peres' efforts to navigate the labyrinth of Middle East politics, his part in the events that led to the Palestinian uprising, his political battles, and his reflections. Moving from his childhood as a Polish immigrant through his adulthood as the young architect of Israel's defense, the film traces Peres' conversion from uncompromising hawk to one of the country's foremost proponents of negotiated peace with the Palestinians and the surrounding Arab states. It also documents the early seeds of this conversion, including his boyhood at a "youth village" that housed both Jews and Arabs. As an adult, the tenor of much of Peres' military and political career has been secrecy: secret negotiations with France in the 1950s to secure arms, secret con-



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*Future Tense*, by Miguel Diaz Olmo, looks at the problems facing New York City youth by focusing on the lives of three American American and Latino children and their parents.

Courtesy filmmaker

tracts with King Hussein of Jordan to realize peace, and even the secret decision to dispatch a rescue team to Entebbe before the government officially sanctioned the raid, as well as his ultimate inability to consummate a successful peace plan. *The Road to Peace*: Galex Foundation, 437 Madison Ave., Ste. 2009, New York, NY 10022; (212) 988-7644.

Last year, at locations throughout New York State, independents Julie Sperling and Douglas Freilich premiered their new documentary, *Dying to Please: The Dolphin Dilemma*. By focusing on swim-with-dolphins programs, the 60-minute film explores the larger issue of the appropriate use of marine mammals in captivity. More than 40,000 people swam with dolphins in 1990 as a part of four experimental programs in Hawaii and the Florida Keys. In *Dying to Please*, Sperling and Freilich question the ethics of such amusements as well as the use of captured dolphins as tourist attractions. With narration by the actor Michael Landon, the film calls attention to the tension between education and exploitation. *Dying to Please* was funded in part by a number of organizations concerned with the welfare of animals, including the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the Fund for Animals, the Culture and Animals Foundation, International Society for Animal Rights, and the William and Charlotte Parks Foundation for Animal Welfare. *Dying to Please: The Dolphin Dilemma*: Biosphere Films, Box 411, Phillips Brook Rd., Garrison, NY 10524; (914) 424-3769.

The systematic destruction of a squatters' building in the East Village neighborhood of New York City is documented in *How to Squash a Squat*, by videomaker Franck Goldberg. In the last days of the Koch administration, during the spring of 1989, the combined city housing and police authorities joined forces to evict the ad hoc residents of the building. Goldberg chronicled the squatters' eviction after an arson fire and their fight to save the building against demolition—an action which resulted in the police occupation of three city blocks. *How to Squash a Squat*, shot "guerilla style" and edited on a shoe-string budget, attempts to show how a corrupt city government can use its police force to disregard the rule of law and violate the civil rights of the poor. *How to Squash a Squat*: Franck Goldberg, Box 695, New York, NY 10009-0695; (212) 677-7679.

Independent producer Miguel Diaz Olmo, who works in both New York and Madrid, has completed a new documentary on the youth of New York City. *Future Tense* tells the stories of three African American and Latino children and their parents and teachers in order to highlight the





problems of escalating drop-out rates and schools and neighborhoods devastated by drug-related crime. In this 30-minute documentary members of the community themselves describe these problems and directly relate them to a lack of affordable housing, high unemployment, and a dependence on public assistance. Shot in super VHS and edited on three-quarter-inch video, Olmo completed the piece last fall. *Future Tense: Parallel 40* Productions, 680-686 Fulton St., Ste. 3A, Brooklyn, NY 11217; (718) 596-3744.

Massachusetts-based filmmaker John Lawrence Re has completed the video album *Dominoes*, intended as an audiovisual portrait of the 1960s. In 14 evolutionary tableaux, *Dominoes* conveys the director's view that during the turbulent decade "one thing led to another"—like dominoes. Rock 'n' roll, revolution, the Vietnam War, and the youth culture of the sixties is distilled in this one-hour ensemble of archival footage and musical soundtracks, featuring such greats of the era as B.B. King's *The Thrill Is Gone*, Jimi Hendrix's *Wild Thing*, and Richie Havens' *Freedom*. *Dominoes* has appeared on Cinemax and various public television stations. Re also plans to release the program as a special 90-minute laser disc. *Dominoes*: Aurora Entertainment, 131 King St., Northampton, MA 01060; (413) 585-8772; fax: (413) 586-8653.

### ATTENTION AIVF MEMBERS

The **In and Out of Production** column is a regular feature in *The Independent*, designed to give AIVF members an opportunity to keep the organization and others interested in independent media informed about current work. We profile works-in-progress as well as recent releases. These are not critical reviews, but informational descriptions. AIVF members are invited to submit detailed information about their latest film or videotape for inclusion in **In and Out of Production**. Send descriptions and black and white photographs to: *The Independent*, 625 Broadway, 9th floor., New York, NY 10012; attn: In and Out of Production.

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**This month's festivals have been compiled by Kathryn Bowser, director of the FIVE Festival Bureau. Listings do not constitute an endorsement. Since some details change faster than we do, we recommend that you contact the festival for further information before sending prints or tapes. In order to improve our reliability and make this column more beneficial to independents, we encourage all film- and videomakers to contact FIVE Festival Bureau with their personal festival experiences, positive and negative.**

### Domestic

**BLACKLIGHT: A FESTIVAL OF BLACK INTERNATIONAL CINEMA**, August, IL. Month-long celebration of Black produced & oriented int'l cinema. Program incl. features, shorts, docs, videos, TV programs. Now in 10th yr, anniv. celebration will incl. workshops, possible competition & retros (incl. Sergio Giral, Latino films, Black British films, African works & films from fest's last 10 yrs). Several directors invited to attend. Held at Film Center of Art Institute of Chicago, DuSable Museum of African American History, Facets Multimedia & DocFilm at U. of Chicago. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, super 8, 8mm, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: June 1. Contact: Floyd Webb, Blacklight, 213 W. Institute Pl., Ste. 207, Chicago, IL 60610; (312) 664-4898; fax: (312) 664-4899.

**GREAT LAKES FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL**, May, WI. Independently made, noncommercial films/videos of any genre eligible for 15th edition of fest, open to artists from IL, IN, IA, MI, MN, OH, WI. Substantial cash prizes awarded w/out regard to cat. or format. Entry fee: \$25. Formats: 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Apr. 10. Contact: Great Lakes Film & Video, Box 413, Milwaukee, WI 53201; (414) 229-6971.

**MARGARET MEAD FILM FESTIVAL**, Sept. 23-26, NY. Now celebrating 15th yr, all doc/short fest programs films on family, cultural change, ritual. Incl. work on real people in real situations in US society or cultures throughout world: village & city life, nonwestern & western cultures, individual portraits & films on whole societies. Audiences number 7,000. No entry fee. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: May 7. Contact: Malcolm Arth/Elaine Charnov/Nathaniel Johnson, Margaret Mead Film Festival, American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th St., New York, NY 10024; (212) 769-5305; fax: (212) 769-5233.

**MOUNTAINFILM**, May 31-June 3, CO. Mountain/mountaineering themes & exploration/interpretation of natural places eligible for competitive fest. Separate video section. Cats: Grand Prize, mountaineering, mountain sports, mountain spirit, technical climbing,

special jury award. No entry fee. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Deadline: Apr. 30. Contact: Jim Bedford, Mountainfilm, Box 1088, 540 W. Galena Ave., Telluride, CO 81435; (303) 728-4123; fax: (303) 728-6933.

**ROBERT FLAHERTY SEMINAR**, Aug. 3-10, NY. 37th annual event programmed by curator/producer Stephen Gallagher & film programmer Coco Fusco. Focus on discussion & criticism of contemporary film/video. Special section on contemporary Arab cinema, w/focus on films from Magreb & how cultural perspectives affect representation of history & collective memory. Program also incl. int'l selection of films/videos that expand definitions of doc (neorealist techniques, experimental combos of fiction & doc, narrative docudrama, pseudo docs). Held at Wells College, Aurora, NY. Preview on 1/2" only. Deadline: May 1. For registration, contact: Sally Berger, Int'l Film Seminars, 305 W. 21 St., New York, NY 10011; (212) 727-7262.

**WINE COUNTRY FILM FESTIVAL**, July 12-21, CA. 5th yr of competitive fest set in northern CA's premium wine country; programs dramatic features, shorts, docs, animation, student films & videos. Noncompetitive film series: Independent Features, International Films, Arts in Film, Films from Commitment. Competition (Gaia Film Awards): open to films about planetary &/or environmental issues & films "that showcase planet's natural beauty, diversity of landscape & wildlife"; dramatic features, nonnarrative films & videos accepted in competition. Entry fee: \$25. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Deadline: May 7. Contact: Justine Ashton, Wine Country Film Festival, 12000 Henno Rd., Box 303, Glen Ellen, CA 95442; (707) 996-2536; fax: (707) 996-6964.

### Foreign

**EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, Aug. 10-25, Scotland. Eclectic programming characterizes 45-yr-old noncompetitive fest, which showcases 170 features, docs, work by new directors, animation, British premieres. Sections: Panorama, Retrospective, Young Filmmaker of the Year, Animation, Eyes of the World (contemporary doc), Late Night Sensations (new exploitation films). Work must be completed in previous 2 yrs. Entry fee: £28. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 3/4", 1/2" (PAL). Deadline: May 24. Contact: David Robinson, Edinburgh Int'l Film Festival, Filmhouse, 88 Lothian Rd., Edinburgh, EH3 9BZ, Scotland; tel: 31 228 4051; fax: 31 229 5501; telex: 72166.

**EUROPEAN MEDIA ART FESTIVAL**, September, Germany. Experimental films, installations, video art, computer animation, performance, multimedia works accepted. Program also incl. retros, special programs. Compensation: 3DM/min. up to 150DM. Entries must be completed after Mar. 1, 1990. No entry fee. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, super 8, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: May 3. Contact: Heiko Doxl/Rolf Sausmikat, European Media Art Festival, Box 1861, D-4500 Osnabruck, Germany; tel: 49 541 21658; fax: 49 541 28327; telex: 94694 STOSN D.

**GIJON INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**, July, Spain. Features or shorts made for youth accepted in all fest sections: official (competition & out-of-competition) & info section (Outlines, Cycles, Retros). Awards: best feature, short, director, actress, actor, special jury prize, youth jury prize (jury of 200 aged 13-18). Entries must have been completed after Jan. 1, 1990 & unawarded in other

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FIAPF-recognized fest. Format: 35mm; preview on 1/2" (PAL), 3/4" (NTSC), Beta. Deadline: Apr. 26. Contact: Festival Internacional de Cine de Gijón, c/o Emilio Villa, 4, Apartado de Correos 76, 33201 Gijón (Asturias), Spain; tel: 985 343739.

**LOCARNO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, Aug. 8-18, Switzerland. For 3rd yr, FIVF hosting fest director David Streiff during his selection of ind. US features. Now in 44th yr as major Swiss cultural/cinematic event, all-feature competitive fest known as "the smallest of the big festivals & the biggest of the small" w/ reputation for innovative programming & support of alternative visions from ind. directors & recently founded nat'l film industries. Unique open air screenings in Piazza Grande, which holds 8,000. Special sections & out-of-competition screenings included. Competition accepts 1st & 2nd fiction features by new directors, art films, low-budget films, work from 3rd World countries, indies & cinema d'auteur. Must be over 60 min., Swiss (preferably world) premieres, completed in previous 12 mo. & not awarded at other FIAPF-approved fests. Educational, advertising & scientific films ineligible. Prizes: Golden Leopard (Grand Prix) & City of Locarno Grand Prize (15,000SF); Silver Leopard (Grand Prix of Jury) & 2nd Prize of City of Locarno (10,000SF); Bronze Leopard & 3rd Prize of City of Locarno (5,000SF); honorable mention & technical prizes. Films should be French-subtitled. Fest provides 5-day hospitality to reps of films in competition. Also has small market attended by many Swiss distributors & exhibitors. Streiff in NYC at end of April to prescreen entries on 3/4" & 1/2". Fest formats: 35mm, 16mm. Handling fee: \$20 (payable to FIVF). For info. & entry forms, send SASE to: Kathryn Bowser, FIVF Festival Bureau, 625 Broadway, 9th fl., New York, NY 10012; (212) 473-3400; fax: (212) 677-8732. Deadline: Apr. 19. In Switzerland: May 31 deadline. Contact: David Streiff, director, Locarno International Film Festival, Via della Posta 6, CH-6600 Locarno, Switzerland; tel: 93 31 02 32; fax: 93 31 74 65; telex: 846565 FIFL.

**LUSSAS DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL**, August, France. Estab. 1989, this noncompetitive all-doc fest features screenings, meetings & seminars on doc form. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", Beta. Deadline: May 15. Contact: Jean-Marie Barbe, Les Etats Generaux du Documentaire, Lussas 07170, France; tel: 75 94 28 06; fax: 75 94 28 81.

**MUNICH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, June 22-30, Germany. Noncompetitive fest has history of showcasing US ind. films before annual audiences of 100,000. 90-100 int'l films shown. Considered leading meeting place for film professionals. Sections: int'l section, perspectives (1st & 2nd works of young directors), ind. film section, special screenings, children's section, short films & docs, lectures, tributes. Film Exchange (for developing contacts) also held. No entry fee. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette. Contact: Internationale Münchner Filmwochen GmbH, Turkenstraße 93, D-8000 Munich 40, Germany; tel: 89 38 19 040; fax: 89 38 19 04 26; telex: 5214674 imf d.

**MYSTFEST**, June, Italy. 12th edition of competitive fest organized to exhibit & promote films w/ mystery, crime & detection, horror, spy, thriller & gothic themes, held in Cattolica or Rimini. Official competition accepts 35mm; noncompetitive 16mm & 35mm. Entries should be Italian premieres & unawarded in other FIAPF-recognized fests. Awards go to best film, leading actor/

actress, original story. Extensive media coverage. Fest pays round-trip expenses & hospitality for director & leading actor/actress of films in competition. Deadline: May 31. Contact: Giorgio Gosetti, director, MystFest, Via dei Coronari, 44, 00186 Rome, Italy; tel: 06 654 41 52; fax: 06 686 79 02; telex: 62 30 92 imago I.

**ODENSE FILM FESTIVAL**, Aug. 2-8, Denmark. Deadline: May 1. 9th biennial of int'l fest for "unusual films w/ original & imaginative sense of creative delight," held in spirit of Hans Christian Andersen. Cats: fairytales; experimental/imaginative. Entries may be live or animated, up to 60 min., produced after Aug. 1, 1987. Awards: 1st Prize: DKK35,000/statuette; 2nd Prize (most imaginative film): DKK15,000/statuette; 3rd Prize (most surprising film): DKK15,000/statuette; 4th-8th Prizes (special jury prizes). Fest also has youth jury. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 3/4", 1/2" (PAL). Deadline: May 1. Contact: 9th Int'l Odense Film Festival, Vindegade 18, DK-5000 Odense C, Denmark; tel: 45 66 13 72, ext. 4294; fax: 45 65 91 43 18.

**TAORMINA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, July, Italy. Now in 37th yr, fest features American Film Week w/ competitive section devoted to young American cinema (showcase for directors beginning careers). Cash awards. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Contact: Sandro Anastasi, Taormina Int'l Film Festival, Via B. Tortolini 36, Rome 00197, Italy; tel: 80 60 18; fax: 80 12 79.

**VELDEN FILM FESTIVAL OF NATIONS**, June, Austria. Nonprofessional films & videos on any topic, under 30 min., accepted for competition. Awards: Austrian Education & Art Minister's Prize, Upper-Austrian Governor's Prize, Gold, Silver & Bronze Medals. Formats: 16mm, super 8, video 8, 1/2" (PAL). Deadline: May 1. Contact: Filmfestival der Nationen, Fremdenverkehrsverband Ebensee, Hauptstrasse 34, A-4802 Ebensee, Austria; tel: 06133 8016.

**VENICE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, August, Italy. At 48, Venice is world's longest running fest & one of the most prestigious. Attended by several thousand guests & large press contingent. Work shown in & out of competition. Awards: Golden Lion (best film); Grand Special Award, Silver Lion (best direction), Volpi Cup (best actor/actress); 3 Oselle (outstanding professional contributions). Sections: Venezia XLVII (main competition), noncompetitive sections Venezia Orizzonti (info. section: varied works illuminating current tendencies & aspects of cinema); Venezia Notte (works of "an intelligently spectacular nature," entertaining but w/ style & content, shown at midnight); Venezia RiSguardi (retro of director, current, or theme); Venezia TV (exhibition of works recently made for TV); Eventi Speciali (screenings of "special & unusual appeal"); Settimana Internazionale della Critica (International Critics' Week-1st & 2nd works; run as ind. part of fest). Films must be subtitled in Italian. Deadline: June 30. Contact: La Biennale di Venezia, Mostra Internazionale d'Arte Cinematografica, Settore Cinema e Spettacolo Televisivo, Ca Giustinian, 1364A San Marco, 30124 Venice, Italy; tel: 520-0311/520-0228

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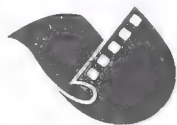
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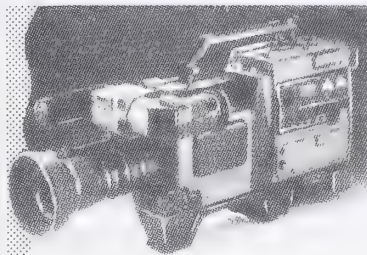
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## Conferences ■ Seminars

**AUTO-CENSORSHIP:** The Chilling Effect After the Fact symposium: Sat., May 4 at the New School for Social Research. Cosponsored by Media Alliance, AIVF & New School. Artists, writers, curators, publishers, journalists, filmmakers encouraged to show & tell how they've been affected by or succumbed to censorship attempts. Contact: New School for Social Research, Media Studies Dept., 2 W. 13th St., New York, NY 10011; (212) 627-9629.

**BOSTON FILM/VIDEO FOUNDATION** workshops: Basic Video Prod., beg. Apr. 9; Writing & Selling for Film & TV, Apr. 13 & 14; Principles & Methods in Editing, various dates between Apr. 16 & May 28; Sync Sound Filmmaking in S-8, beg. Apr. 17; Intro to 3/4" Editing, beg. Apr. 20; Intro to Video Paint Systems, Apr. 20; Screenwriter's Workshop: The Story Structure, Apr. 20 & 27; Prod. Mgmt., May 18. Contact: BF/VF, 1126 Boylston St., Boston, MA 02215; (617) 536-1540.

**CENTER FOR NEW TV** workshops: Basic Video Prod., beg. Apr. 1 & May 1; Advanced Video Prod., beg. Apr. 6; Steadycam Workshop, Apr. 20; Getting Good Interviews on Videotape, Apr. 16; Producing a Documentary, beg. Apr. 8; Intro. to Videotape Editing, beg. Apr. 2 & May 14; Intermediate Editing, beg. Apr. 8 & May 6; Grantwriting, May 11; Writing Comedy Sketches for TV, beg. Apr. 2. Contact: CNTV, 912 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago, IL 60605; (312) 427-5446.

**DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY TV** workshops: Free Basic TV Prod., every Thurs; Lighting Workshop, Apr. 1 & 8. Contact: DCTV, 87 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10013; (212) 966-4510.

**FILM IN THE CITIES** video weekend workshops: VHS Prod., Apr. 6 & 13; VHS Editing, Apr. 27 & 28. Contact: Film in the Cities, 2388 University Ave., St. Paul, MN 55114.

**FILM/VIDEO ARTS** spring workshops: Advanced Screenwriting, Apr. 3-May 8; Intro. to 3/4" Video Editing, May 4 & 5; Advanced 3/4" Editing, May 18 & 19; Arri SR Workshop, May 4 & 5; Essentials of Prod. Insurance, Apr. 30; Intro. to Digital Effects, Apr. 15-May 20; Time Code Basics, Apr. 6; Intro. to Optical Printing, Apr. 13 & 14. Contact: F/VA, 817 Broadway, New York, NY 10003; (212) 673-9361.

**YELLOWSTONE MEDIA ARTS** summer workshops: series of 1-week workshops, lectures, discussions, exercises & screenings, June 17-July 25. Incl. Cinema & Social Change in Latin America, Grant Writing, Advanced Cinematography, Capturing the Images of Sounds of Culture, From Manager to Mogul: The Business of Making Films, Scriptwriting, Documentary & Endangered Cultures. Reasonable course fees & accommodation costs. Contact: Paul Monaco, Dept. of Media & Theatre Arts, Montana State Univ., Bozeman, MT 59717; (406) 994-6224.

## Films ■ Tapes Wanted

**BROOKLYN MUSEUM** seeks high quality 35mm & 16mm films & single channel video for Fall 1991 series of works by & about Native Americans. Narrative, doc. & experimental work under 60 min. Should address Native Amer. art, history, culture, political activism. Deadline: Apr. 15. Send 3/4" or 1/2" tapes w/ SASE to: Dara Myers-Kingsley, Film & Video, Brooklyn Museum, 200 Eastern Pkwy, Brooklyn, NY 11238.

**Notices are listed free of charge. AIVF members receive first priority; others are included as space permits. The Independent reserves the right to edit for length. Deadlines for Notices will be respected. These are the 8th of the month, two months prior to cover date, e.g., April 8 for the June issue. Send to: Independent Notices, FIVE, 625 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.**

**DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY TV** seeks tapes for screening series protesting 500 yrs of genocide & hardship, in anticipation of 1992 quincentennial of Spanish invasion of "New World." Topics incl. exploitation vs. self-determination, land rights, resistance, political activism, cultural expression & political prisoners. Material should generate discussion & analysis of effects of European/American conquest of indigenous peoples. Send tapes w/ SASE to: Simone Farkhondeh, DCTV, 87 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10013; (212) 941-1298.

**15 MINUTES:** Washington, DC, nightclub & film/video venue seeks 1/2", 3/4" & hi-8 tapes & 16mm films for Wed. night screenings. Narrative, doc., animation, video art & PSAs welcome. Special call for "video about things green & radical, hangouts, the street, our beloved banks & other rip-offs, general defiance & specific outrage." Fee of \$10-25 for shorts; up to \$100 for features. Club also seeks original ambient video. Contact: 15 Minutes, Eric Gravley, 1030 15th St., NW, Washington, DC 20005; (202) 408-1855 or 667-5643.

**FUTURE ARTS:** Media Arts in North Carolina, 2-day conference on film, video, & related arts to be held May, 1991 at Duke University in Durham. Seeking works by NC artists &/or w/NC themes. Rental fees paid. Contact: Tom Whiteside; (919) 684-4130.

**IV-TV,** cablecast on Ch. 26 in Seattle. Video artists, students, amateurs & frustrated news camerapeople encouraged to submit mini-docs, video art, found footage, news leaks. Deadline: 1st of ea. month. 25 min. max. Send tapes w/ SASE to: IV-TV, 1125 N. 98th St., Seattle, WA 98103.

**NEW DAY FILMS,** self-distribution coop for independent producers, seeks new members w/ recent social issue docs. for US nontheatrical markets. Deadline: Apr. 1. Contact: Ralph Arlyck, 79 Raymond Ave., Poughkeepsie, NY 12601.

**TAPESTRY INTERNATIONAL,** distributor of independently produced docs, drama, music, & performance, seeks new product to sell to foreign & domestic TV markets. Contact: Lisa Honig, Tapestry Int'l, 924 Broadway, New York, NY 10010; (212) 667-6007; fax: (212) 473-8164.

**THE '90s** is accepting tapes for weekly program on nat'l

## THE GULF WAR AND PEACE ALTERNATIVE MEDIA ACTIVITIES

**Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting:** Information on mass media reporting; contact list of major news media outlets; 175 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10010; 212/633-6700

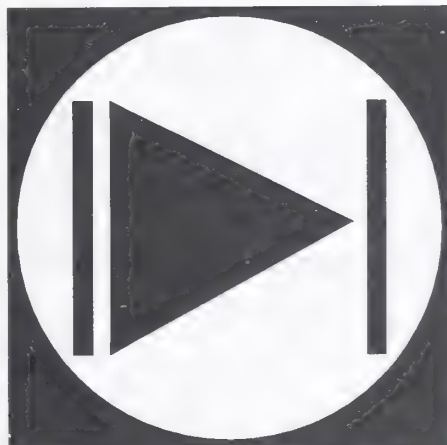
**Gulf Crisis TV Project:** Produced two-hour television series; soliciting tapes and information for programming of alternative media on public TV and public cable, as well as to community groups; 339 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10012; 212/228-6370

**Labor Beat:** Producing public access cable programs in Chicago; Bob Hercules, Larry Duncan; 312/850-1300

**Media Network:** Clearinghouse for independent media on militarism; 121 Fulton St., New York, NY 10038; 212/619-3455

**Peacemakers:** SANE/Freeze cable TV series on 20 systems in Southern California; John Owen, Box 521, Los Angeles, CA 90053; 213/223-2966

**Paper Tiger TV West:** Producer of weekly updates on anti-war activism in the Bay Area on public access cable; Jesse Drew, 2690 20th St., San Francisco, CA 94110; 415/558-0200



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PBS. Works should be under 10 min. & submitted on hi-8 or 3/4". If return of tape desired, incl. SASE or \$3 postage. Fee: \$125/min. for tapes aired. Contact: *The '90s*, 400 N. Michigan Ave., #1608, Chicago, IL 60611.

## Opportunities ■ Gigs

**FILM/VIDEO ARTS** seeks interns for min. 6-month commitment. Interns receive free media classes, access to equipment, facilities in exchange for 15 hrs/wk work. Film/video knowledge helpful but not required. Minorities strongly encouraged to apply. Appls accepted at all times. Contact: Angie Cohn, intern coordinator, F/VA, 817 Broadway, New York, NY 10003-4797; (212) 673-9361.

**INSTRUCTORS/VIDEOGRAPHERS:** Summer positions w/Legacy Int'l to train youths, ages 14-18. Duties incl. instruction in video prod. & media, some program documentation. Located 4 hrs. SW of Washington, DC. June 17-Aug. 22. Contact: Marlene, Legacy Int'l, Rte. 4, Bedford, VA 24523; (703) 294-5982.

**MEDIA NETWORK**, nat'l media advocacy org. that promotes social issue media, seeks membership/outreach coordinator & director of information services. Contact: Media Network, 121 Fulton St., 5th fl., New York, NY 10038; (212) 619-3455.

**RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS:** Indo-US Subcommission on Educ. & Culture offers long & short-term awards in all academic disciplines for 1992-93 research in India. Scholars & professionals w/limited or no prior experience in India especially encouraged to apply. Deadline: June 15. Fulbright Scholar Program for 1992-93 offers grants for research, combined research & lecturing, or university lecturing. Deadline for Australia, South Asia, most of Latin America & USSR: June 15. Deadline for Africa, Asia, Europe, Middle East, Canada & lecturing awards in Caribbean, Mexico & Venezuela: Aug. 1. Contact: Council for Int'l Exchange of Scholars, 3007 Tilden St., NW, Ste. 5M, Box NEWS, Washington, DC 20008-3009; (202) 686-7877.

## Publications

**NAMAC MAIN TRAVEL SHEET** lists alternative & ind. media arts works & provides forum for exchanging long-range programming ideas. Subscription now a benefit of membership in Nat'l Alliance of Media Arts Centers. Contact at new address: MAIN Travel Sheet, NAMAC, 480 Potrero Ave., San Francisco, CA 94110; (415) 861-0202.

**SAFE PLANET:** *The Guide to Environmental Film & Video* published by Media Network, now avail. Price: Grassroots groups & individuals, \$7.50; institutions, \$11.50. Postage & handling \$2. Contact: Media Network, 121 Fulton St., 5th fl., New York, NY 10038; (212) 619-3455.

**THREE DECADES OF TELEVISION:** *Catalog of Television Programs Acquired by the Library of Congress 1949-1979* lists over 14,000 programs acquired by world's largest film & TV archive. \$51 prepaid. Contact: Dept. 36-GH, Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D.C. 20402-9325. Stock number is 030-000-001851.

**WAR OR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST:** Third World Resources provides educators, political activists & concerned citizens w/ background to understand crisis in Persian Gulf & take action. *Middle East: A Directory of Resources*, \$14.45; *Third World Struggle for Peace with Justice*, \$14.45. Other resources avail. Contact:

Third World Resources, 464 19th St., Oakland, CA 94612-9761; (415) 835-4692; fax: (415) 835-3017.

## Resources ■ Funds

**CPB TELEVISION PROGRAM FUND** announces multicultural programming solicitation for development & production of 58 min. programs for nat'l public TV broadcast. Proposals may be submitted in 3 areas: children's & educational, news & public affairs, and drama. Producer & director must be minorities. Deadlines: April 15 & August 15. For guidelines, contact: Multicultural Programming Solicitation, TV Program Fund, CPB, 901 E Street, NW, Washington DC 20004-2006; (202) 879-9600.

**DCTV COMMUNITY PROJECTS** provides members w/ free or low-cost equipment for projects that positively impact communities by raising awareness of unexplored issues, opening new areas of artistic expression, increasing artists' visibility, or involving people in videomaking process. Deadlines ongoing. Contact: Community Projects, DCTV, 87 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10013; (212) 966-4510.

**ELECTRONIC ARTS INTERMIX:** New Equipment Loan Service provides high-quality video equipment for long-term, low cost rentals to artists & nonprofits for use in public video exhibitions & installations. Contact: EAI, 536 Broadway, 9th fl., New York, NY 10012; (212) 966-4605; fax: (212) 941-6118.

**EXPERIMENTAL TV CENTER** Residency Program offers artists opportunity to study techniques of video image processing during a 5-day intensive residency. Deadline: July 15. Also provides Presentation Funds of small grants to nonprofits to assist w/ presentation of works of audio, video & related electronic art. Deadline ongoing. Contact: ETC, 180 Front St., Owego, NY 13827; (607) 687-1423.

**FILM/VIDEO ARTS** accepting appls for 3 residencies in optical printing during summer 1991. Residencies provide 6 days access to JK Optical Printer & 1 day film testing 2 wks prior to residency. Applicants should have previous exp. w/ optical printer & have completed F/VA's optical printing workshop. Deadline: May 1. For more info. & appl. procedure, contact: Artist service coord., (212) 673-9361.

**LYN BLUMENTHAL MEMORIAL FUND** for Independent Video will fund video production & criticism that addresses theme of The Unlegislated Body. Fund encourages video projects that make inventive & strategic use of small format technologies. Grants range from \$1,000-\$3,000. Deadline: May 15. For appl., write: Lyn Blumenthal Memorial Fund, Box 3514, Church St. Station, New York, NY 10007.

**MERCANTILE LIBRARY WRITERS STUDIO** provides quiet workspace for writers. Open 45 hrs/wk. Price: \$300 for 3-month residency, w/ renewal up to 1 yr. Contact: Mercantile Library Writers Studio, 17 E. 47th St., New York, NY; (212) 755-6710.

**MICHIGAN COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS:** Creative Artist Grant Program deadline: Apr. 5. Contact: Michigan Council for the Arts, 1200 Sixth St., Detroit, MI 48226; (313) 256-3719.

**NATIVE AMERICAN PROGRAM GRANTS:** Native American Public Broadcasting Consortium announces open solicitation of proposals for development & production of Native American programs for nat'l public TV. Seeks projects that originate w/ Native American



experience. Grants range from \$5-50,000 for R&D, script development, prod. &/or postprod. Genres incl. drama, performance, doc, public affairs & animation. Deadline: Apr. 1. Contact: 1991 Native American Program Grants, NAPBC, Box 83111, Lincoln, NE 68501-6869.

**PENNSYLVANIA COUNCIL ON THE ARTS** provides grants for prod. projects of PA artists through nonprofit fiscal sponsors. Deadline: Apr. 1. Contact: PCA, Finance Bldg., Rm. 216, Harrisburg, PA 17120; (717) 787-6883.

**PIVFA SUBSIDY PROGRAM** to facilitate completion of ind., noncommercial projects by members of PA Independent Film/Video Assoc. Grants range \$500 to \$1000. Deadlines: April 12, June 12. For complete guidelines & form, call (215) 895-6594.

**PROPOSED VIDEO GRANT:** San Francisco Artspace offers artists access to video hi-8 equipment & audio facilities. Artists may request ass't for full project or only postprod. needs. Nonresidents of greater Bay Area eligible for travel & per diem honoraria of up to \$2,000. Grants awarded to artists & ind. producers living anywhere for noncommercial videos in experimental, narrative, editorial/nonfiction & doc. Deadlines: May 1 & Sept. 15. Contact: San Francisco Artspace, 1286 Folsom St., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 626-9100; fax: (415) 431-6612.

**WYATT SCHOLARSHIP FUND:** Film/Video Arts offers full 1-yr scholarships through Eugene Wyatt Scholarship Fund to minority students. Film & video courses incl. prod., mgmt., writing, etc. Deadline: May 15. Also, three 6-day residencies in Optical Printing Room avail. Deadline: May 1. Contact: F/VA, 817 Broadway, New York, NY 10003; (212) 673-9361.

## AIVF REGIONAL CORRESPONDENTS

AIVF has a network of regional correspondents who can provide membership information, hold meetings, and aid recruitment in areas of the country outside New York City. AIVF members are urged to contact them about AIVF-related needs and problems, your activities, and other relevant information and news:

**Howard Aaron**, Northwest Film and Video Ctr., 1219 S.W. Park Ave., Portland, OR 97205; (503) 221-1156

**Cheryl Chisolm**, 2844 Engle Road, NW, Atlanta, GA 30318; (404) 792-2167

**Dee Davis**, Appalshop, 306 Whitesburg, KY 41858; (606) 633-0108

**Loni Ding**, 2335 Jones St., San Francisco, CA 94133; (415) 474-5132; 673-6428

**Dai Sil Kim-Gibson**, 1752 17th St., NW, Washington, DC 20009; (202) 232-6912

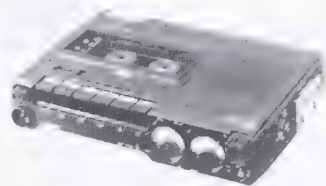
**Deanna Morse**, School of Communication, Grand Valley State Univ., Allendale, MI 49401; (616) 895-3101

**Lourdes Portillo**, 981 Esmeralda St., San Francisco, CA 94110; (415) 824-5850

**Bart Weiss**, 1611 Rio Vista Dr., Dallas, TX 75208; (214) 948-7300

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## AN AIVF/CPB EXCHANGE

*The following exchange of letters between AIVF president, chair of our Advocacy Committee, and independent producer Robert Richter and the vice president for programming at the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Eugene Katt, is reproduced here to keep our members abreast of AIVF's efforts to monitor and call attention to the erosion of CPB's support for independent production.*

November 1, 1990

Dear Mr. Ledwig,

The AIVF has become aware of disturbing reports that CPB is considering cutting back or abandoning the \$6 million Open Solicitation part of the Program Fund.

As you know, we have great concern that so much of the Program Fund has come to be earmarked for specific series and now—with public TV's reorganization—reallocated to PBS. It has become increasingly difficult for independents to have direct access to the substantial share of the national production funds that Congress mandated for independent production.

Moreover, the elimination of the current Open Solicitation structure threatens to eliminate the use of panels as they are generally understood in the selection of program proposals. The use of panels to review proposals "wherever practicable" is still a requirement in CPB's authorizing legislation. The occasional use of nominators, consultants, or *post hoc* series review panels is no substitute for the traditional panel process that Congress intended CPB to use since the creation of the Program Fund in 1980.

Based on the long history of independents being consistently and increasingly squeezed out of the funding that is clearly supposed to go to them, we are skeptical about vague assurances that independents will receive a substantial share of program funds in the future.

The ITVS helps redress our situation to some extent, but Congress explicitly cautioned that the creation of ITVS does not "exhaust the CPB's statutory obligation to provide a substantial portion of its programming fund to independent producers and productions," and that public broadcasting should "increase utilization of independent producers or independent productions throughout the structure of public broadcasting." We cannot sit by idly while the shrinking base of funding we have had through the Open Solicitation structure is threatened with extinction.

Program Fund director Don Marbury is quoted in *The Independent* (October 1990) as justifying the elimination of the existing structure due to

limited funding for the process and because so many excellent proposals are now excluded. Rather than curtail or eliminate Open Solicitation, we strongly urge that CPB increase its commitment to this excellent and effective funding process as part of its responsibility to support the development of innovative new programming not funded through the existing major series, now handled by PBS.

We recognize that the restructuring of public broadcasting has altered the environment in which the Open Solicitation process operates. We would welcome an opportunity to meet with you, Don Marbury, and any other appropriate CPB and/or PBS officials to clarify the status of the funding of independently produced programs *outside* the context of ITVS and to develop or retain structures that will enable smaller independent film and videomakers to compete fairly for public broadcasting program funds throughout all of public television's program funding structures.

—Robert Richter  
president, Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers

November 15, 1990

Dear Mr. Richter,

Donald Ledwig asked that I respond to your letter of November 1, 1990, regarding the elimination of the Open Solicitation process within CPB's Television Program Fund.

Let me begin by stating, emphatically, that CPB has no intention of reducing its commitment to independent producers, or eliminating the advice of panels of experts in the decision-making processes. CPB is well aware of its legislative requirements. Having said that, let me remind you that the restructuring of public broadcasting is also the result of congressional directives.

The National Program Plan under which we began operating on October 1 of this year [1990] was formulated with input from all segments of the public broadcasting community, including independent producers. The National Program Policy Committee that will govern PBS in its expenditure of nearly \$100 million in program production funds is broadly representative, and includes independent producers. Finally, our decision to redesign the proposal solicitation process is designed to stimulate increased independent production and to help independent producers focus on the needs of the public television system.

The Open Solicitation, while a serviceable mechanism over the last seven years, will be phased out after decisions are made in the current

round. A number of new vehicles are being designed which we believe will better serve the system and the producing community.

Following is a brief overview of new and existing funding mechanisms proposed for the coming year.

As many as four "content-specific solicitations" during the year will replace the Open rounds. These content-specific rounds will: offer a great deal of flexibility; more strongly ensure that projects supported by CPB will be scheduled in high-profile slots by PBS; increase carriage by local stations; and, ultimately, better serve the American viewing public.

Content-specific solicitations may be broadly or narrowly defined, and could range from one-hour documentaries on a particular theme, to mini-series concepts that might, for instance, bring the history of Latino contributions to the culture and sociology of America. The first such solicitation is already planned.

The Television Program Fund will solicit scripting proposals for development of a dramatic mini-series that is contemporary, distinctive in style, and reflective of the cultural diversity of the country. Up to five writers will be selected initially. A panel will subsequently be asked to recommend up to three pilot scripts for production funding. Should one of the pilots emerge as stellar, full production funding would be awarded.

Future content-specific solicitations will include a search for a multi-million dollar daily series for children.

Given that increased emphasis on multi-culturalism is a high priority for CPB in the nineties, a major initiative in FY 1991 will be the creation of two minority program solicitations. In addition, \$1 million has already been allocated to the minority consortia for various and development production activities.

The Television Program Fund has always received unsolicited proposals. In recent years, funds have not been allocated for them and, in most cases, producers were instructed to submit through Open Solicitation. The Program Fund will formalize the existing ad hoc process under the banner of "General Program Review." Guidelines have been drafted and producers will soon be notified that, on a quarterly basis, a slate of target-of-opportunity ideas with potential for the national PBS schedule will be reviewed by staff and evaluated by outside readers, with funding recommendations made to the director. One million dollars has been earmarked this year for this mechanism that offers the opportunity for producers with projects of excellence, that do not fit a



content-specific solicitation, to compete for funds on an on-going basis.

The \$10 million CPB/PBS Challenge Fund will continue to allow independent producers and stations to seek funding for major productions. Proposals can be submitted at any time during the fiscal year; guidelines are available from CPB or PBS; and a panel of experts is called upon to review those proposed by CPB and PBS for support. A recent Challenge Fund award for a project titled *The 90s* will bring to American viewers a series of 13 hour-long programs composed of short edited pieces from the independent producing community. The programs will showcase alternative programming—from underground documentary footage to the most sophisticated animation.

As you know, CPB has always insisted that independent production be an integral part of the major program strands it funded. Though funding and monitoring of those series now rests with PBS, the responsibility for inclusion of independent production is no less real.

The Corporation has also continued to support a number of other series in which independent production is featured prominently: *POV*; *Alive From Off Center*; *American Masters*; and, most recently, *American Pie*.

In addition to direct production funding, support for the minority consortia continues. With the aforementioned \$1 million increase in support of their operations, the National Black Programming Consortium, National Asian American Telecommunications Association, Native American Public Broadcasting Consortium, and the Latino Communications Center have also become significant funders of independent and station concepts that have potential for the PBS national schedule. In addition to soliciting proposals directly from their indigenous producing communities, the consortia are beginning to work with many PBS series executive producers.

The 1990s loom as a decade of change. Collaboration and coordination, coproduction and cofinancing are all vital to the success of public television in the years ahead. Formerly disparate subsets of the system are now embracing this attitude. In the final analysis, programming decisions must continue to focus on excellence.

CPB is charged with leading the system into the 1990s by supporting new program development. We believe that the processes and procedures outlined above ensure this leadership role, and will generate increased opportunities for independents and stations alike to submit their best ideas for bringing to American viewers, programs of high quality, diversity and excellence as originally envisioned in the Public Telecommunications Act.

We will soon be notifying the producing community of these new initiatives. In the meantime, I welcome your comments.

—Eugene W. Katt

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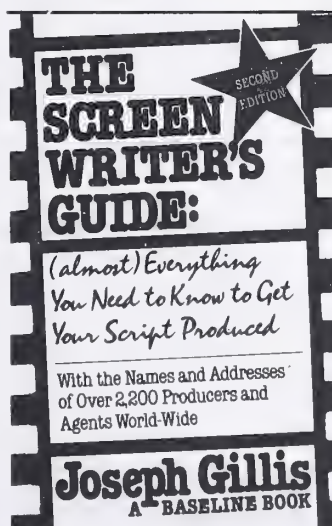
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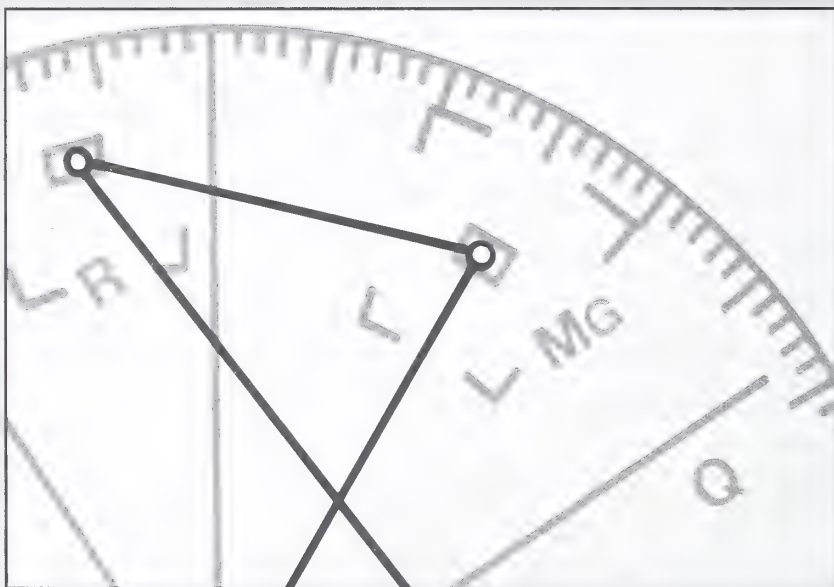


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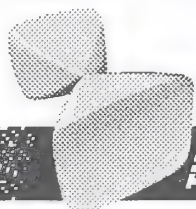


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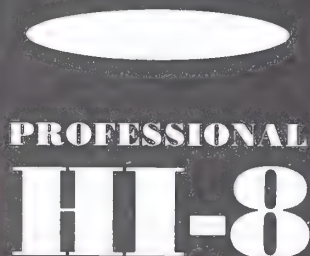
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COVER: An activist protests the Catholic Church's position on condom use and reproductive rights at a "die-in" at Saint Patrick's Cathedral in New York City, documented by the camcorder-wielding Damned Interfering Video Activist Television (DIVA TV) crew. Photo from *Like a Prayer*, 1991.

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## STATE FUNDING FIASCO

### NY's Cuomo Singles Out Arts Budget for 56 Percent Cut

New York State is not alone in this fiscal nightmare. Virginia's arts budget has been reduced by 80 percent, Ohio is facing a proposed 60 percent cut, and Massachusetts is expecting its arts budget to be slashed by two-thirds this coming year.

Still reeling from the shock of last year's 15 percent budget cut, the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) was dealt its most severe blow yet by Governor Mario Cuomo. In his executive budget proposal for fiscal year 1991-92, announced on January 29, Cuomo slashed his recommended appropriation for the arts agency by a staggering 56 percent. The cut would reduce NYSCA's total budget to only \$22.3-million, down from last year's \$50.6-million—the lowest level in NYSCA's history since 1973. By comparison, last year NYSCA awarded \$25-million to artists and organizations in New York City alone. Arts advocates lobbying Albany for restoration of NYSCA's funding are facing difficult odds, given the state's gaping \$6- to \$7-billion deficit.

New York State is not alone in this fiscal nightmare. According to Jeffrey Love, director of research at the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA), some state arts agencies are being scaled back to an even greater degree. Virginia's arts budget has been reduced by 80 percent, Ohio is facing a proposed 60 percent cut, and Massachusetts is expecting its \$12.6-million budget to be slashed by two-thirds, to \$4.5-million, this coming year. In 1988, the Massachusetts arts council's budget was \$21-million. Says Love, "This is all part of what seems to be a downward trend all along the East Coast and Mid-Atlantic states." Total appropriations to state arts agencies fell in 1990 for the first time in 13 years, according to NASAA. And signs indicate the trend will steepen.

"People are very rattled and unnerved around here," says NYSCA Electronic Media and Film (EMF) program director B. Ruby Rich. Even now, after last year's 15 percent cut, program staff has found itself hamstrung. A hiring freeze is in effect, the numbers of panelists reduced, and the staff travel budget measurably curtailed. "We've lost 20 percent of our staff," says EMF program associate Deborah Silverfine. "We've been grounded since October. We can't even ask for tokens to travel around the city." In addition, she notes, certain programs have already been "cut to the bare bones," including preservation support and library acquisitions of films. Although Rich does not think the council would zero the Individual Artists Program, which administers film and video production grants—a commonly expressed fear among producers—she projects that NYSCA could easily lose its edge as a pioneer funder in film, media, and other arts.

Diane Martuscello, executive director of the statewide arts lobbying organization, the New York State Arts and Cultural Coalition (NYSACC), paints an even bleaker worst-case picture. "For the last two years, the Business Council of New York State has proposed putting NYSCA functions under the Department of Economic Development," she states. This means that "peer panel reviews might be replaced by formula funding and considerations of quality might have different value. In other words, all artistic judgements based on expert opinions might go by the boards." The end result, predicts Martuscello, is that the arts agency "would no longer exist as we know it."

But even if this scenario isn't realized, Cuomo's budget still leaves NYSCA in a stranglehold. By law, the agency must devote half its budget to designated "primary institutions"—including such major organizations as the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the American Museum of the Moving Image, as well as the Foundation for Independent Video and Film. NYSCA is also required to allocate at least \$ .55 per capita to each county, which accounts for an additional \$11-million. If NYSCA is allocated only \$22.3-million, as Cuomo recommends, this leaves a meager \$150,000 for grants that don't satisfy either requirement.

Arts advocates across the state are trying to make sure this doesn't happen. "We are willing to take cuts like everyone else, but not this much; 56 percent is highly inequitable," declares Martuscello. Under the governor's proposal, NYSCA is one of only two state agencies targeted for such drastic cuts. Related services, such as the State University system and the Parks and Recreation Department, are slated for reductions of two to 20 percent. NYSACC is trying to persuade state legislators to bring NYSCA's cuts in line with other areas—10 to 15 percent, rather than 56. The legislature is due to pass a revised state budget by the beginning of its fiscal year on April 1. However, the process may drag on through May, as it has in past years.

Many are frustrated by the lack of economic logic behind Cuomo's measures. Jeffrey Binder, press secretary to Roy Goodman, Republican State Senator from Manhattan and chair of the Senate Special Committee on the Arts and Cultural Affairs, points out that the arts generate \$7-billion in yearly state revenues. Every dollar spent on the arts earns the state \$4 to \$5 more. "[We're] not throwing money down a sink hole here. The arts



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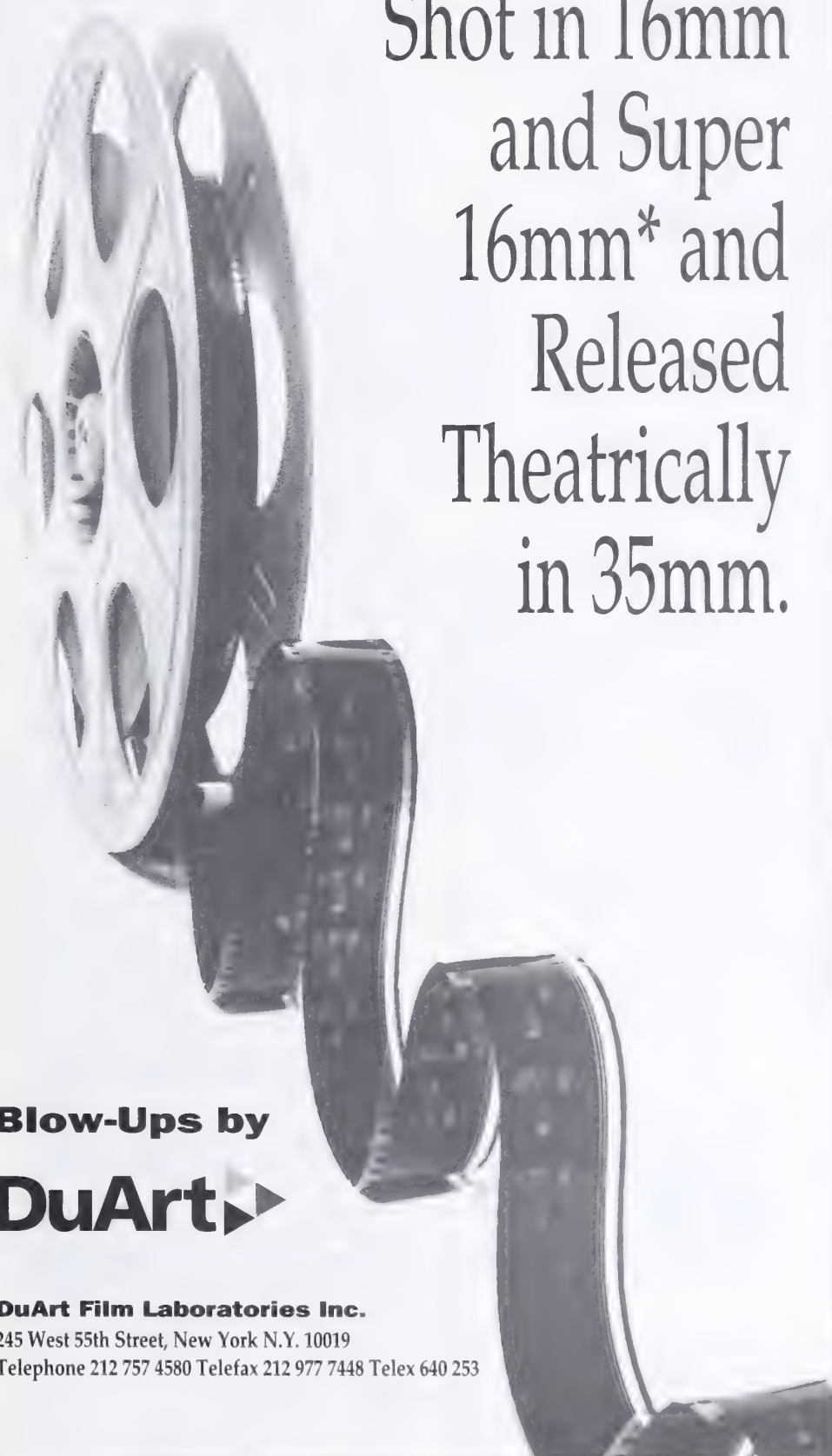
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make money through the jobs generated and the revenue from tourist-related services," he insists.

Using both economic and social arguments, arts advocates, under the leadership of NYSACC, have been working the halls of Albany every Tuesday since the executive budget was released, as well as testifying before committees, writing representatives, and trying to get media coverage. Although this has been the Alliance's most successful mobilizing effort yet, Martuscello warns that, given the size of the proposed cutbacks, lobbying is not enough. "We have to be very realistic about this issue," she says. "The shroud over this arts budget is a \$6-billion dollar deficit, and the question is, can we get the State to approve tax hikes?"

QUYNH THAI

*Quynh Thai is an independent producer and freelance writer.*

## NBC NIXES FREELANCE FOOTAGE FROM IRAQ

Three weeks into the Gulf War, there was another US television journalist in Iraq besides CNN's Peter Arnett, although no one would have known it from the footage aired on the evening news. On February 2, freelance video journalist and Downtown Community TV cofounder Jon Alpert crossed the border into Iraq, together with coproducer Maryann DeLeo and former US Attorney General Ramsey Clark, who was on an independent fact-finding mission. Alpert and DeLeo spent the next week in Baghdad, Negif, and points in between. They shot scenes of devastation along the highways and in the boarded up cities and taped interviews with shell-shocked citizens, often without any form of censorship or official supervision. But their exclusive footage never made it onto the *NBC Nightly News*, as had been agreed. Following a bitter fight within the network, NBC News president Michael Gartner squelched the material, sight unseen, and terminated NBC's 12-year relationship with Alpert.

Alpert recalls his brief and final conversation with the NBC news chief: "Michael Gartner said he'd had enough of our reporting, that whenever we went to a third world country there was always trouble that came after that. He was tired of it, he didn't trust us, and he didn't like that we were travelling with the Ramsey Clarks of this world."

Complaints about Alpert's reports on the *Today Show* and *NBC Nightly News* have kept NBC's legal department busy in the past. However, most came from the same source: the right-wing media watchdog group Accuracy in Media. AIM's head, Reed Irvine, regularly made unfounded accusations about staging, endangered sources, and other matters, which the network would just as regularly investigate and refute. One time, however, Alpert slipped. When the Soviets pulled out of Afghanistan, he filmed a reenactment of the US Ambassador lowering the flag over the Kabul embassy—a choice he now regrets.

On the issue of gaining entry to Iraq through war opponent Ramsey Clark, Alpert says, "I didn't know Ramsey Clark is as controversial a person as he seems to be in the United States. But I know that we can divorce ourselves from whatever philosophy he might have. And it was clear to NBC people who saw our tape that this was an objective and independent report that wasn't colored by association with anyone."

What Alpert and DeLeo videotaped, and NBC refused, was some of the only US footage not subject to the constraints of pool coverage and security review, having been shot in areas outside US military control. In the unescorted 10-hour drive to Baghdad, they taped rows of smoldering trucks, blackened gas stations, and other targets. In the city, they found their four-star hotel virtually vacant, sand-bagged, and operating by candlelight. Alpert and DeLeo recorded interviews at a bombed fish market and visited the disputed baby milk factory. While skeptically questioning the factory's barbed wire fence and camouflage, Alpert notes in his narration that the French construction company responsible for the plant confirmed its intended use as a baby milk factory. Also shown are the results of a presumably inaccurate bombing raid: a bridge stands intact, while nearby a Pepsi plant and residential neighborhood have been reduced to rubble. We also see the victims of this bombing raid, including a hospitalized grandfather whose facial features are entirely burned off.

Given the popularity of the war and the public's hostility toward the press, NBC's Gartner may not have wanted to air footage that humanizes the Iraqis to such a degree, possibly fearing attacks of sympathizing with the enemy, such as CNN and Arnett endured. In addition, as Alpert points out, the fact that NBC was not in the lead in its war coverage might have played a part. Because of this, "everyone was defensive and sensitive," says Alpert. "There are different ways to react. One is to get good and unusual material. This is the way the people in the trenches reacted—Steve Friedman, Tom Brokaw, and Tom Capra. The other way is defensive—'We don't want any more problems or controversy.'"

Alpert's footage was finally broadcast on WNET-New York's local program *13 Live* and on MTV, which had been airing war reports produced by the independent production company Globalvision. Still, the material did not air quickly. "It was on after the war over, basically," says Alpert.

This is not what Alpert is used to. Rather, his reputation has been made largely by being on the frontline—and the news—first. He and coproducer Keiko Tsuno were the first US news team to tape inside Cuba after the revolution. They were the first to get into Vietnam after the fall of Saigon and the first to report from inside Afghanistan after the Soviet invasion. They talked their way into Iran after all other Western journalists had been forced out. And Alpert filmed the Sandinista's triumphal procession in 1979 while seated in the second car in the motorcade.





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Such journalistic scoops endeared him to network news chiefs in the past. Now this era is over. Alpert glumly concludes, "I'm just extremely disappointed that [the Iraq footage] wasn't broadcast without the nay-sayers even taking a look at the tape."

PATRICIA THOMSON

## BYE-BYE AMERICAN PIE

Independent producers are finding that the difficult business of getting work included in a public television series has become even more difficult this year. As the Public Broadcasting Service moves into a new era—one in which a single executive controls the national program schedule, rather than individual stations—series that acquire independent work are now facing a much more competitive climate for airtime. And funding for independent productions continues to be a problem, particularly as the Open Solicitations category within the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's Television Program Fund has been phased out and replaced by calls for project proposals dealing with specific themes [see "The Incredible Shrinking Fund: The CPB Program Fund's Open Solicitation," October 1990].

According to Melinda Ward, director of the Drama, Performance, and Cultural Programming department at PBS, cuts in corporate and government funding "mean people are going to have to get entrepreneurial and smart about how they produce." Entrepreneurial, as Ward and others refer to it, means financing a production through domestic and foreign sales to a variety of outlets, including cable and home video. This strategy is beginning to pertain to series producers as much as to independents.

The primetime magazine series *Edge*, due to premiere this fall, is an example of the new thinking. *Edge* is coproduced by the BBC and WNET-TV, New York. According to US-based executive producer Steven Weinstock, the rationale behind the BBC/WNET deal was initially based more on the show's content than economics. Each hour-long episode consists of a number of shorter pieces on US culture. Weinstock and London-

based executive producer Michael Hall believe the series would benefit from separate and distinct influences from either side of the Atlantic. There will be three producers working in New York and three in London. Weinstock says that toward the end of *Edge*'s first season he hopes to commission independent productions for the program. But before that happens, he notes, the series needs to find its on-screen identity through the use of pieces created by the show's in-house producers.

Content aside, economics was an equally strong reason for the coproduction structure of *Edge*. Weinstock says that its \$3.5-million budget is beyond WNET's reach without the BBC's economic input. BBC will contribute approximately \$650,000 of that total, with PBS putting up \$1.9-million. Weinstock says the remainder of the budget will come from grants.

In other cases series producers are playing a role in helping independents find financing through sales to ancillary markets. At *Long Ago and Far Away*, a family series produced by WGBH-Boston that is based on classic children's literature, producer Sandy Cohen says that production partnerships with the individual producers of its episodes have enabled her to stretch the limited funds she received for the third year of the series. Because of cutbacks, *Long Ago* has shrunk from 16 episodes in the first season, to nine in the second, and six this year. "I am up front with the independent producers we deal with," says Cohen. "We've changed from an acquisition series into a coproduction series because our funding is limited." To supplement production financing, Cohen steers producers to foreign home video and television buyers. Without these measures, the series might not have even stretched to six episodes this year.

One series that hasn't fared so well is *American Pie*, a production of KTCA-TV in Minneapolis/St. Paul. After only one season, *American Pie*'s funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's Television Program Fund was discontinued. The series' one-hour episodes were composites of short documentary pieces produced by both independents and PBS stations dealing with a particular theme.

Michale Sporn's *Abel's Island* appeared on WGBH's children's series *Long Ago and Far Away*, which is encouraging independents to supplement production funding through foreign sales because of cuts in funding from PBS.

Courtesy WGBH





Despite the difficulties that independent producers face in getting something on the remaining PBS series, the current price being paid per minute does not seem anemic. At *The 90's*, the price per minute is \$125, more than double last season's \$60. At *P.O.V.* the price per minute is \$375—up from \$350 last year. And at *Alive from Off Center*, the price is \$500, about the same as last year. Three years ago that series paid \$300 per minute.

According to PBS's Ward, when you add up the programs that buy independent productions this year and compare that number to 1990, "I don't think we've lost anything." But, she adds, the new program-specific solicitation system which has replaced the Open Solicitation would not be called a positive development by many independent producers. "Economically, in all of the arts we're suffering—equally," says Ward. CPB Program Fund director Don Marbury agrees and predicts that more of the 7,000 independent producers on his mailing list are going to be left without a PBS showcase than in the past.

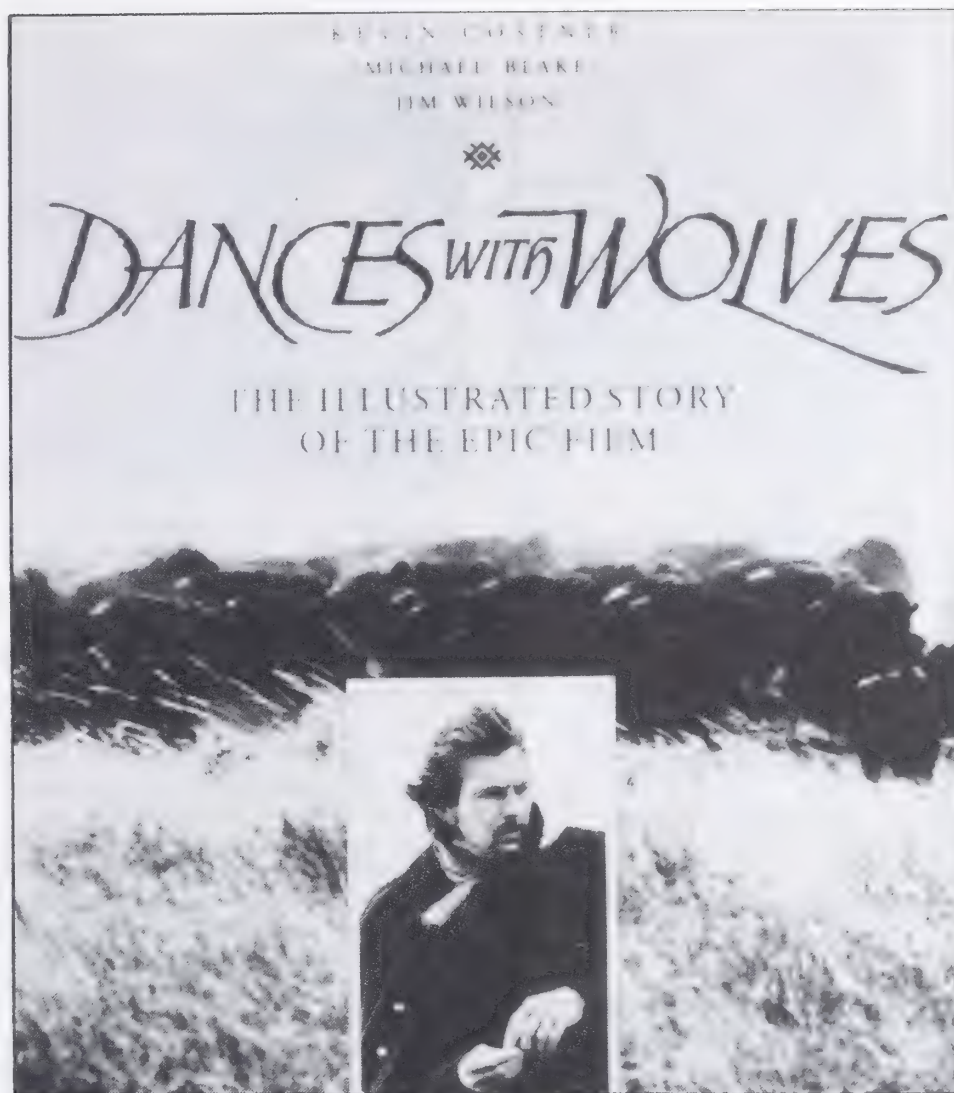
SCOTT BARRETT

*New York-based freelance writer Scott Barrett has followed the television business for Broadcasting and View.*

## NY IATSE WOOS LOW-BUDGET PRODUCERS

Since the merger last fall of the National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians (NABET) Local 15 and the East Coast International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE), New York independents have been nervously waiting to see whether they will ever be able to shoot in the Big Apple again [see "NABET 15 No More: The Rise and Fall of the East Coast Local," November 1990]. With IA now the only game in town, low-budget filmmakers are concerned that NABET's flexibility with low-budget projects will be replaced by the IA's more traditional rigidity towards alternative wage structures and working terms. But nearly six months after the merger, prospects are looking bright for independents. With former NABET members swelling IA's ranks and a Hollywood boycott of New York City shoots halting big-ticket production from November to March, the IA needs to find work for its members. As a result, the union has begun wooing independents.

In addition to relaxing entry regulations, IA has formed a new mechanism for making union deals with low-budget producers. This new body, called the East Coast Council, is made up of business managers from the various locals who are empowered to negotiate across-the-board contracts with producers having budgets under \$5-million. In the past, each of IA's craft locals made separate deals. The new council is working with producers on a case-by-case basis, tailoring contracts specifically to each budget. So far, contracts have been signed with five television and film projects,



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Vinny (Nestor Serrano), Tom (Mario Joyner), and Willie (Doug E. Doug) perform a little "ghetto theater" on a New York City subway in *Hangin' with the Homeboys*. Its premiere at the Sundance Film Festival was accompanied by a union picket.

Courtesy New Line Cinema

including the TV series *Urban Anxiety* (\$3-million), by David Lynch and Mark Frost's Propaganda Films; *Fathers and Sons* (\$1.2-million), by Spike Lee; and *Juices* (\$3-million), by Lee's cinematographer and first-time director Ernest Dickerson. In each case, the producer had limited cash and was able to negotiate contracts involving a combination of deferred and residual payments.

Lou D'Agostino, business manager of IA Local 644 (cinematographers), co-chairs the council with former NABET business manager Brian Unger—the man many credit for fostering the IA's newfound open-mindedness. D'Agostino is very optimistic about the council, despite lingering doubts from the more conservative IA local leaders. "IA is realizing that there is a new framework in the industry," he says, referring to the proven success of low-budget projects. "And we're willing to work within that framework."

Although an exact, long-term formula for residual contracts has not been hammered out, D'Agostino is confident deferral and profit-sharing contracts will last. He notes the cinematographers' local has been experimenting with such contracts for the past four years on projects such as *Longtime Companion* and *The Trial of Bernie Goetz*. Now with the East Coast Council, D'Agostino claims, "There will definitely be no more reason to shoot nonunion in this town. Independent producers will get access to the best talent at great prices, and there will be a renaissance of independent productions in New York City."

*Juices* producer Preston Holmes concurs. He initially approached Unger at NABET, then continued discussions after the merger with Unger and D'Agostino. "[Ours] was clearly a case of a film that could not have been done union without concessions," Holmes insists. "They were very flexible and willing to discuss basically everything strictly according to how much our budget is."

While Holmes admits the locals are a long way from fully agreeing on more a flexible posture towards producers, he believes they are bent on making New York a more competitive location. "The important thing is that they are willing to talk. They won't give away the store, but they

want to insure that shooting in this city continues," he attests.

Nevertheless, there have been recent glitches in the dealings between the unions and independents. At the Sundance Film Festival last January, representatives from New York editors' Local 771 picketed the premiere of *Hangin' with the Homeboys* to protest what they claimed was New Line Cinema's refusal to negotiate union status and wages for three of the four picture editors/assistants on the film. Because the feature was made under the affirmative action contract with the Screen Actor's Guild, its budget had to remain under \$2-million. The picture's producers maintain that complying with 771's demands would have added \$500,000. They say they offered a guaranteed deferral contingent on the film's opening, but 771 argues the lump sum promised was not even enough to cover overtime and benefits.

Local 771 business manager Bill Hanauer points out that the dispute erupted prior to the merger and maintains the union is not trying to chase away independents. Although he admits to being worried because some members "have been burned by deferral deals," Hanauer says that 771, which is not a member of the East Coast Council but "is working closely with them," is actively courting independents. Nonetheless, many independents are wondering what kind of message the union is sending. *Homeboy* director Joe Vasquez, a New Yorker, will be shooting his next project in California, although it is set in the South Bronx.

For now, the union seems to be moving slowly towards a new outlook. This was partly IA international president Alfred DiTolla's intention when he engineered the absorption of the more liberal NABET Local 15 last fall. But it remains to be seen whether the progressive ranks within IA will win over their more conservative kin. Skeptics also worry that now that the Hollywood contracts are settled, low-budget priorities will take a back seat. Not so, says Holmes. "If anything, the studio boycotts emphasize how much unions need independents. If they aren't flexible," he asks, "wouldn't they be contributing to the growth of skilled, nonunion crews?" Evidently the union



leadership agrees. Says D'Agostino, "The outcome [of negotiations with Hollywood] does not change the positive outlook for independents."

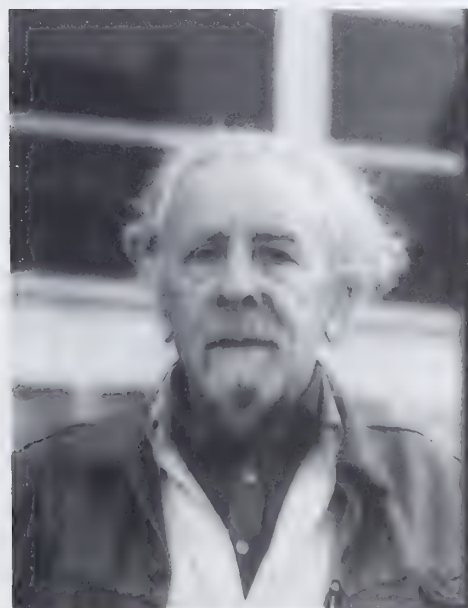
QT

## LEO HURWITZ: 1909-1991

Leo Tolstoi Hurwitz helped shape and define the very notion of independent filmmaking throughout a long and rewarding career as a documentary filmmaker, television pioneer, educator, and political activist. He died on January 18, 1991, of colon cancer. He was 81 years old.

Born in Brooklyn in 1909, Hurwitz experienced a political upbringing by his parents, both of whom were active socialists. He first became interested in film while studying on scholarship at Harvard. After graduating in 1930, Hurwitz moved to New York, working initially as a freelance writer and photographer. He befriended photographers Paul Strand and Ralph Steiner and soon became involved with the Film and Photo League, a left-wing artists' collective whose primary objective was to document the activities of the workers' movement, which received little, if any, coverage in mainstream newsreels. As part of the League, Hurwitz directed *Hunger 1932*, a documentary about the Hunger March on Washington, as well as films about the false prosecution of nine young black men for rape (*The Scottsboro Boys*) and the government's harassment of dissenters (*Land of Liberty*, 1939).

In 1935, Hurwitz and others formed a splinter group of the League, called Nykino, to continue to explore issues central to the US left with an increased emphasis on formal innovation. The name as well as the agenda were beholden to much-admired Soviet models. That same year, Hurwitz, Strand, and Steiner traveled west to shoot Pare Lorentz' classic documentary on the dust bowl, *The Plow that Broke the Plains*.



Leo Hurwitz

Photo: Jon P. Petrusson

Soon afterward, Hurwitz and Strand founded Frontier Films, an offshoot of Nykino. A substantial group of films were produced collectively under its aegis, including *Heart of Spain* (1937), *China Strikes Back* (1937), and *People of the Cumberland* (1938). The best-known of the group's efforts, however, was Hurwitz and Strand's *Native Land* (1942), a dramatized reconstruction of eight civil rights violations.

Frontier Films was disbanded upon US involvement in World War II, and Hurwitz spent the next several years working on wartime propaganda films for various governmental agencies. After the war, he was enlisted by CBS Television to organize their burgeoning news department as chief of News and Special Events. He left CBS in 1947 to make *Strange Victory*, a documentary about postwar racism in the US.

Although Hurwitz was blacklisted during the fifties, he continued working (often anonymously), producing a group of films for the CBS series *Omnibus* and serving as director of film production for the United Nations. In 1956 he made *The Museum and the Fury*, a documentary about the Nazi concentration camps. In 1961 Hurwitz directed the daily international broadcasts of the Adolf Eichmann trial in Jerusalem. His condensed version of the Nazi's trial, *Verdict for Tomorrow*, won both Peabody and Emmy awards. In the mid-sixties he and other members of the Screen Director's International Guild, which he cofounded the previous decade, sued the Directors Guild of America over their continued use of the loyalty oath. The outcome was a US Court of Appeals decision requiring the DGA to remove the oath from its membership application.

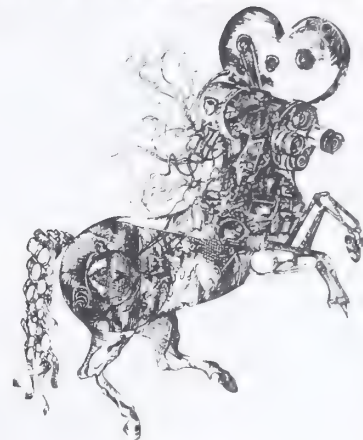
In this period Hurwitz and his second wife, Peggy Lawson, collaborated on a series of films for National Educational Television and the American Federation of the Arts. From 1969 to 1974, Hurwitz was a professor of film and chairman of the Graduate Institute of Film and Television at New York University. The filmmaker spent a good part of the seventies working on *Dialogue with a Woman Departed* (1981), a four-hour homage to Lawson and visual poem about the period in which she lived.

His commitment to making politically engaged, socially relevant films continued throughout his life. He was working on a script for a film about abolitionist John Brown when he died. Speaking about his maturation as a filmmaker during the thirties, Hurwitz once remarked, "It gave me a deep-lying conviction that social and individual predicaments are amenable to solution—that the changes and contradictions we live through can go beyond despair and alienation. And it confirmed my feeling that I belonged in the conspiracy of art (against socially dictated modes of perception, feeling, thinking), which is part of the larger and continuing conspiracy to be human."

TOD LIPPY

Tod Lippy is a filmmaker and writer living in New York City.

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## SEQUELS

**Manhattan Cable** has been ordered to add a fifth public access channel after losing a suit brought by several independent producers. The federal district court judge found the cable operator to be in violation of its franchise agreement and the Cable Act of 1984 because it provided only four public or leased access channels. Manhattan Cable's poor record on access was a major obstacle last year when franchise owner Time Warner tried to renew its contract ["Cable Franchise Fracas in Manhattan," August/September 1990].

In California, a new statewide cable consumer group has been formed, called the **Consumer Cable Corps**. Its mission is to fight rate hikes, poor service, and "the arrogance of the industry towards its customers," according to founder Sylvia Siegel. Previously, as founder of Toward Utility Rate Normalization (TURN), Siegel ran a long and successful campaign against utility company rate increases.



**Lillian Jimenez** left her position as director of the Paul Robeson Fund to act as a freelance consultant. She will be working with Media Network, the Museo del Barrio, and other organizations. **Kevin Duggan** has stepped down as director of information services at Media Network in New York City

and has been replaced by **David Meieran**, formerly of the Testing the Limits collective. In addition, Media Network has appointed **Juan Mendez** as its membership and outreach coordinator. Mendez was previously with the Lower East Side Family Union. **Julian Low** has been appointed to the newly created position of national director of the National Alliance of Media Arts Centers. Most recently, Low administered the National Endowment for the Arts/NAMAC's Media Arts Development Fund.

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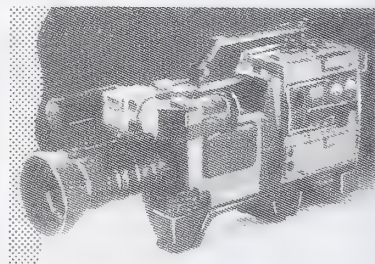
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## CLOSE ENCUENTRO OF A FIRST KIND

### The Cruzando Fronteras Conference

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 ROSA LINDA FREGOSO
 

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Held in Tijuana, Baja California, from November 30 to December 2 of last year, the Cruzando Fronteras (Crossing Borders) conference brought together women video- and filmmakers, as well as critics from Mexico and the US. For the first time ever, Mexican and Latina film practitioners from both sides of the border met for three days—and for several reasons. They protested the exclusion of women from Chicanos 90, an event exclusively reserved for Mexican and Chicano male filmmakers. They also honored Mexican filmmaker Matilde

which has divided Mexican and Chicano/a intellectuals for some time.

My journalistic account of this historic event departs somewhat from an insider's perspective. As a young activist in the Chicano Power Movement of the sixties, I remember similar *encuentros* between Mexican and Chicano intellectuals from both sides of the "border." These gatherings were often disappointing, opening rather than healing wounds between sisters and brothers who had been separated by that great scar which divides the US from the Spanish-speaking part of the continent. During the sixties, the Chicano Power Movement focused attention on the fact that Mexicans from both sides of the border had been divided by the US-Mexican War of 1848, in which Mexico lost half of its territory to its northern neighbor. Socialized by dominant cultural and educational institutions that disfigured and misinterpreted our history, Chicano intellectuals sought refuge in retracing our roots, reestablishing our lineage, and reconnecting with the "legitimate" historical agents, Mexican intellectuals. Yet class differences were often difficult to transcend.

After all, we—Chicanos/as—were first-generation university intellectuals, but we were also the sons and daughters of the Mexican working class. Mexican intellectuals were generally from middle-class origins. They were also, perhaps unwittingly, patronizing and paternalistic—correcting our factual errors in history, ridiculing our reinvention of an idyllic Aztec past, drawing attention to our linguistic "mistakes" (i.e., our muddled mixture of Spanish with English). They came to teach us what we painfully knew had been taken away by an official historiography that distorted our experience in the US. Despite their progressive leanings, the elitism of Mexican intellectuals kept the wounds alive. And nowhere were divergences between Chicano and Mexican intellectuals more evident than in our contrary relations to "Mexican" symbols and icons.

In opposition to the red-white-and-blue flag of racism and imperialism, Chicanos/as paraded the red-white-and-green Mexican national flag. Yet, in the Mexican context, the latter represented oppressive nationalism/patriotism. Whereas United Farmworkers Union-led boycotts marched behind the banner of the Virgin of Guadalupe and Chicano/a artists celebrated her as the patron of the poor, for Mexican intellectuals the Virgin served to mystify the Mexican "masses." For



A highlight for many attendees of Cruzanedo Fronteras was the appearance of veteran Mexican filmmaker and mentor Matilde Landeta. Her *La Negra Angustias*, set in the Mexican Revolution, features an assertive, independent woman and anticipates the concerns of feminist filmmakers.

Landeta and the late video artist Pola Weiss. They exchanged practical information on funding sources and distribution networks, explored the possibility of joint productions, and entertained theoretical questions pertaining to a feminine aesthetic.

Yet in many respects Cruzando Fronteras' historic significance goes beyond the politics inherent in the meeting's novelty. Indeed, the conference was more than a premiere *encuentro* (encounter) between imagemakers and critics from two sides of a border, sharing ideas and impressions. The conference blurred the boundaries which the very notion of border elicits (my reference here is not to some abstract postmodern notion of a border). Cruzando Fronteras also healed a wound



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Because of *La Negra Angustias'* treatment of issues like sexual and racial oppression, critic B. Ruby Rich suggested that this 1949 film should mark the beginning of the New Latin American Cinema, rather than the male-directed films of the 1950s.

them, she embodied the repressive politics of the Catholic Church in Mexico. Given the irreconcilable nature of these perspectives, I have not looked forward to formal meetings with Mexican intellectuals. I accepted the invitation to participate in *Crossing Borders* less to engage my Mexican counterparts in a scholarly dialogue than to deliver a paper, view films, and spend some time with Chicana filmmakers. Years ago, I had given up trying to explain the multifaceted Chicana perspective to Mexican intellectuals.

But on the second day of the conference, during a panel on Chicana films, Mexican filmmaker María Novaro intimated something along these lines: "During the sixties I used to ridicule Chicano artists for depicting emblems like the Mexican flag and the Virgin of Guadalupe in their art works, because these were symbols of the hegemonic forces, symbols which were used to exploit the Mexican people. But in the midst of all the suffering and hardship in Mexico today, I now realize that I'm missing something. By invoking these symbols, Chicanos have given us something back which we seem to have lost. And today I feel I have a lot to learn from the Chicanas. I want to wear the Virgin of Guadalupe on the back of my jacket." The sincerity of Novaro's words sparked a turning point in my relation to intellectuals from the Mother Country.

The *encuentro* of Mexicana and United States Latina Film and Video Makers was organized by the Colegio de la Frontera Norte (COLEF) and a steering committee comprising Chicana filmmakers Lourdes Portillo (Xochitl Films) and Nancy de los Santos; Rosa Martha Fernández, director of TV-UNAM (the National Autonomous University of Mexico); and Norma Iglesias from COLEF. The conference was sponsored by several institutions, including the Rockefeller Foundation, the Centro Cultural de la Raza, Programa Cultural de las Fronteras, TV-UNAM, Xochitl Films, and the Autonomous University of Baja California.

To some degree, the event originated as a reaction to the exclusion of Chicana filmmakers from the recent Chicanos 90. Hosted by Mexican President Salinas de Gortari, the Chicanos 90 ceremony was held at the Instituto de Cinematografía in Mexico City. Moreover, preparations are underway for May 1991, when primarily male Chicano filmmakers will host their Mexican counterparts at a similar *encuentro* in Los Angeles. Not only did the details surrounding the event surface at the opening panel of *Crossing Borders*,

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but Chicanos 90 was a frequent topic in hallway and dinner discussions throughout the three-day conference in Tijuana. As most participants concurred, the politics of sexism remains a potent force, compounding the difficulties facing independent film- and videomakers today on both sides of the border.

In the case of Mexican women filmmakers, whose experience in the trade predates that of Chicanas, the politics of exclusion based on gender is nothing new. Mexican journalist Patricia Vega gave a dismal account of women's participation (or lack thereof) in the Mexican film industry. According to Vega, from 1917 to 1990 there have been only 26 feature films directed by 11 women. Moreover, only four of the 233 members of the Mexican Association of Directors are women. Two, the veterans Matilde Landeta and Marcela Fernández Violante, were present at Crossing Borders.

Active in every phase of the conference, both Landeta and Fernández Violante gave younger filmmakers a solid introduction to the history of women's struggles as filmmakers. The opportunity to engage with these two pioneers of Mexican cinema on an informal basis was, for Chicanas in particular, one of the high points of the conference. Their counsel and support were truly inspirational. Beyond their spirited interventions during the discussion period of every panel, the films by Landeta and Fernández Violante were most impressive, since *La Negra Angustias* and *Trotacalles*, by Landeta, and *Frida and Cananea*, by Fernández Violante, exemplify a feminist politics of social commitment.

Indeed Landeta's early feature film *La Negra Angustias* anticipates current concerns of feminist filmmakers. The film is set during the Mexi-

can Revolution, patterning the strategy of framing "sensitive" issues in historical events—a strategy which helps filmmakers circumvent the likelihood of State sanctions in response to the political volatility suggested by the film. Produced at a time before Mexican women were allowed to vote, the film's main character is an assertive, independent woman. Thus, the film's subtext advocates equal rights and supports the women's suffrage movement in Mexico.

What is striking about *La Negra Angustias* is the complexity with which it renders race relations: the main character is partly black, and the black presence in Mexican society is rarely acknowledged. Moreover, the film is highly critical of gender oppression, in particular sexual abuse of women by men. *Angustias*, the main character, shuns romantic advances by a man, refusing his hand in marriage. Although in the end she gives in to romantic heterosexual love, there are moments where the character's sexuality remains ambivalent to the extent that her unspecified sexual preference unleashes acts of homophobic hysteria among the townspeople. It is the film's bold treatment of these issues which moved film critic B. Ruby Rich to suggest a revisionist chronology for the New Latin American Cinema movement. Contesting "phallogentric definitions" of the movement during her talk at Crossing Borders, Rich proposed that the beginnings of New Latin American Cinema date instead to 1949, with the production of *La Negra Angustias*, rather than the mid-1950s, which is the period generally assigned to its inception.

Fernández Violante has been no less daring in her cinematic production. Among her films featured at the conference was *Cananea*, a fictional film based on the exploitation of Mexican miners

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by a US boss. Produced under the auspices of the Mexican government during President Echeverría's tenure (1970-76), *Cananea* was censored for dealing with the controversial privatization and sale of Mexican mining interests to foreign investors.

Nearly 80 films and videos by Latinas from both sides of the border were shown during daily screenings, including eight feature films by Mexican filmmakers. The works exhibited include the usual fare of didactic (commissioned) documentaries but also newer experimental works, demonstrating the wide spectrum of aesthetic and political positions taken by Latina imagemakers. Dealing with social problems faced by US Latino/as—immigration, AIDS, homelessness, drug addiction, and religion, for example—the bread-and-butter pieces featured at the conference included *Port of Entry*, by Nancy de los Santos; *Visa for a Dream*, by Sonia Fritz; *Viva Eu*, by Tania Cypriano; *The Salt Mines*, by Susan Atkins and Carlos Aparicio; *Vaya con Dios*, by Sylvia Morales; and *La Ofrenda*, by Lourdes Portillo.

Also evident among the films and videos by Chicana artists was an interest in what has been designated "the politics of representation." Indicative of this direction were the works that framed political themes—like cultural identity, ritual, and collective or individual revisionist history—and employed newer experimental styles. In this respect, a number of shorts by Chicana videomakers exemplify a new trend in image-making. T. Osa Hidalgo de la Riva's *Olmea Rap*, for instance, is a montage set to rap music. *Anima*, by Frances Salomé España, renders the traditional celebration of the Day of the Dead in a ritualized form. Sandra P. Hahn's depiction of this same celebration, *Replies of the Night*, uses computer animation. Formal experimentation enters Beverly Sánchez Padilla's documentary about Juan Chacón (the main character of *Salt of the Earth*). *Corrido de Juan Chacón* layers clips from the movie and singing by a female vocalist as commentary, thus resisting the temptation to resort to didactic voiceover.

A new aesthetic trend emphasizing expressive over referential approaches, as well as different interests in subject matter, were taken up in critical panels entitled Individualism and Collectivity, the Feminine Aesthetic, and Images of Everyday Life in Cinema. For Ruby Rich, differences in thematic concerns among women artists suggest a "shift from exteriority to interiority." According to Rich, recent productions by Latin American women reclaim the individual, signalling a movement away from the "revolutionary to the revelatory." Ana Marie Mier's talk on films by Mexican women also traced a trend towards "individualization" and the "abandonment of collectivity," exemplified in several of the Mexican films screened at Cruzando Fronteras: *El Ultimo Tranvía*, by Olga Cáceres; *Una Isla Rodeada de Agua* and *Azul Celeste*, by María Novaro; *Nadie Es Inocente*, by Sylvana Zuanette; *Los Pasos de Anna*, by Marise Sistach; and *A la Misma Hora*, by

Teresa Mendicutti. In a similar vein, Fernández Violante's recent film, *Nocturno Amor que Te Vas*, exemplifies the tendency Mier terms the "woman as voyeur."

If many of the newer films represent a post-modernist preoccupation with the self, identity, and subjectivity, it would be grossly reductive to identify this as the dominant trend among Mexicana filmmakers. More properly, the need to specify individual subjectivities enriches the social activism which has historically informed the works of so-called Third World women. Politically committed films that come to mind are *La Casa Dividida*, by Rosa Martha Fernández, an innovative documentary rendered in the style of a soap opera. *La Casa Dividida* deals with the problems a small town family faces when its members migrate to the US, but also ingeniously incorporates actual historical subjects as coproducers of the films. Another activist film, *No Les Pedimos un Viaje a la Luna (We're Not Asking for a Trip to the Moon)*, by Mari Carmen de Lara, documents the plight of women garment workers after the earthquake in Mexico and the formation of the 19 de Septiembre Union.

The success of Crossing Borders more than satisfied the objectives envisioned by conference organizers. First of all, the conference opened avenues of communication between Latina artists on both sides of the border. Women exchanged experiences, discussed joint projects—including a series of bilingual TV programs about film- and videomakers—and made concrete steps towards establishing distribution networks. A recommendation was even made for suspending union restrictions for Chicanas filming in Mexico.

The *encuentro* ended on an emotional high, with participants celebrating in the traditional Latino fashion of dancing all night and into the morning hours. Yet this celebratory posture was not your usual pat-on-the-back finale that characterizes many conferences. *Cerrando con broche de oro* (literally, closing with a golden brooch), conference participants had much to celebrate. For one, the Colegio de la Frontera's President Jorge Bustamante committed the sum of \$30,000 for a biannual conference in Tijuana. The Mexican Secretariat of Foreign Relations' (SRE) representative, Tere Franco, offered to fund a Latina film and video program which will tour internationally as part of the SRE's Program for Mexicans Abroad. A catalogue will accompany the exhibition. And a permanent seven-member board of directors of Latinas from both sides of the border was elected by conference participants. These are the major reasons why Cruzando Fronteras participants danced until four a.m. After all, concrete accomplishments are what blurring borders is all about.

Rosa Linda Fregoso is assistant professor in the Departments of Communication and Chicano Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. She is currently writing a book on Chicano/a cinematic representation.



## STRIKE UP THE BAND

## Live Musicians at Affordable Prices

MICHAEL SAHL

The difference between live and synthesized music is not fundamentally a matter of "sound." "Sound" can be sampled, but music can't. Composers make up notes and give directions, but only musicians can make it music.

A film with a low budget needs a low-budget score. Currently everyone seems to think the only solution is "synthetic." Disaster stories about out-of-control costs of studios and studio musicians circulate like atrocity stories in wartime. A history of rock-and-roll waste and open-ended sessions poison the air. So bring in the synthesizers—the Yamaha, the Korg, and the various Midis. "They can do anything. They can adjust length, pitch, color, tone, and they can do it in any time frame."

But what about the sound? "Hey, we've got sampling! All our sounds are real sounds. Real strings, real percussion, even real voices." I'd like an acoustic guitar. "Guitar? We've got seven guitars in here (patting the Korg), and listen to this drum set—jazz, rock, Brazilian, Cuban, African drums. What isn't in this hard drive we have on disc."

Sound like the answer to your dreams? Ideally, it could be. Multitracking and computer boards allow the ultimate choice of what to keep and what to combine with what. It puts the whole operation in your hands, and you don't have to communicate with anybody across that difficult gulf that separates music and film. No language problems and no sync problems. But I would add to that list, no music, no life, no good. Synthesized music sounds exactly like what it is—to wit, a mechanized, quantified, predigested cartoon track made of Lego blocks.

I'm not saying that synthesizers are useless. I've used them often as secondary voices and, occasionally, as leads in scientific and industrial films. For filling up the middle and giving the illusion of mass to a small ensemble, they have no peer. The very cool but obsessive quality that comes from creating rhythms on the sequencer (a mathematically exact pattern that no human musician can emulate) does have force and power—in horror movies, in certain kinds of industrial sequences, in jeans commercials, and even for some postmodern moments of existential meaningless and inexplicable anxiety.

But mechanical perfection is not, will never be, and needn't be a substitute for the organic, musico-dramatic effect of instruments. The warmth, the humanity, the emotion, the glamour, the brilliance, which come not only from the sound of the instruments but from the individual human contribution of the player—this very idiosyncrasy and quirkiness is what the electronic score lacks. If you listen to the old scores of Max Steiner or Bernard Herrmann, much of their effect comes

from the unique contribution of individual players, perceptible even on fuzzy old optical tracks.

The difference between live and synthesized music is not fundamentally a matter of "sound." "Sound" can be sampled, but music can't. Composers make up notes and give directions, but only musicians can make it music. Half of what a composer does is to turn the musicians on, so that they wake up and do things that nobody can program. This is the life and beauty of music, as you hear it: not just Ray Charles, but Ray Charles' band; not just Miles, but Miles' rhythm section; not just Ozawa, but the whole Philharmonic.

For a number of years, the synthesizer has been invading the musical theater. Piano cum synthesizer cum percussionist has replaced the traditional small band in the pit. The sound is thin and metallic, but it is tolerable in live performance as long as it accompanies singing, which is the primary focus of the musical stage. The synthesizer does quite well for "cute" effects and fill, but where there is any soulfulness to be expressed, the piano takes the lead. Likewise for underscoring dialogue in film, much can be tolerated, but when you have an MOS sequence, a dramatic hold on a face, or a long traveling sequence, the poverty of mechanized music becomes impossible to ignore.

You *can* afford real musicians. The last long (low-budget) film I scored had an ensemble of five players, the one before had seven, and the one before that had 13. The costs in all three cases were competitive with synthesized budget scores.

Let H stand for a musician's hourly rate, figured as one hour of a three-hour session.\* Each musician charges H for an hour of recording time. A perfectly adequate but cheap studio (there are dozens in Manhattan and every composer knows at least five) will charge about 2H per hour, including tape stock and extras. If your composer is well prepared and timings are worked out either to stopwatch or to the electric metronome, if the musicians are pros and are used to recording briskly (and the good ones are), it is possible to lay down 15 minutes of recorded music in a three-hour session. The scores to most feature films, typically 30 minutes of music—including optional extras and alternate versions—can be laid down in one double session (six hours). If five musicians play for six hours (where one musician

\*Scale is about \$100 an hour and an uptown studio is about \$200 an hour. But very often musicians work for less than scale and the studios go down proportionally.

is the leader and therefore gets 2H per hour), the cost of the raw session will be 36H for musicians and 12H for the studio—a total of 46H for the double session. The mix can probably be done in four hours, which should cost about 12H. So the net recording and mixing budget comes to 60H.

Using a multitrack synthesizer, the speed of laying down the music is many times slower, since one player is making a complete pass for each instrument. Then there is search time, as each track is laid down, for the most plausible or least implausible sound. In the case of percussion, this can be an agonizing, not to say mind-numbing experience. Then there is the Law of Murphy, patron saint of all techies, which causes all kinds of strangeness. Things disappear. Tracks laid down in sync with other overdubs come out mysteriously out-of-sync. To the vicissitudes of recording equipment add the vicissitudes of the computer. Net result: the lay down rate of 15 minutes of music per hour can fall to one minute per hour. Assuming that the composer has agreed to play all sync parts as part of his creative fee and that no other musicians need be hired, studio time would total 60H, plus 30H for the mix (many tracks need to be resynthesized in the mix to make them sound “collectively”), totalling 90H, as opposed to the 60H total with human musicians.

But how will I know what I’m getting before it’s too late? With this question, we come to the major, noneconomic reason why synthesized music is in vogue. It’s a question of communication and trust versus control. If you can’t communicate your musical ideas and trust that they’ll come back from the composer enhanced, if you don’t understand the process, you’ll feel more

comfortable and more in control with the synthesizer. It’s a language problem. There is a technical language of music which has the virtue of specificity, but no emotional or dramatic descriptive powers. Then there is everyday language about music, which can convey much more about the effect of music, but is frighteningly vague.

Often the filmmaker has heard something, or several different things, that seem right. Sometimes there is no idea yet—or, there was an idea but it’s out of date by the end of the shoot, or no longer inspires. Whatever input the filmmaker can give, be it scattered and vague, it is a beginning and therefore precious.

Then what? Film scores, however original they may be in relationship to film, are not supposed to be all that original as music. Unless you’re Raúl Ruiz (Godard on occasion), and you want to use music to deconstruct the scene, a totally new musical form will tend toward self-importance and overwhelm other cinematic elements, like story or character. So scores generally derive from a synthesis of sounds which are preexistent, from sources that both filmmaker and composer can hear. Communication is therefore possible.

First you have to listen to samples that have the wrong music but the right sound. Then the composer can write and record on some keyboard instrument the right music, or many right musics, but at this stage, of course, with a crummy wrong sound. It’s worth transferring the ugly keyboard version to mag and putting it up editorially against whatever cut is available. When it becomes too awful to listen to the sound of a piano playing what should be a violin, a horn, or a flute, you can reference the research music that has the approximate right sound on it—to reassure yourself that

the music will do what you want it to do. Usually composers have a host of examples of finished work employing a large range of sound language. By immersion in the process, and by repetition, you can learn to translate from a sketch or “dummy” score to the real thing. Alas, you will never be able to hear the finished score before the session, but all kinds of alternate versions and cues can be planned to anticipate and accommodate variations of taste.

For the \$952,000 budget (total music budget \$23,000) feature *Waiting for the Moon*, director Jill Godmilow and I decided on a basic sound combination of clarinet, accordion, violin, viola, guitar, piano, and bass (with some doubling up or overdubbing of the strings). The blend of the violin and viola on one hand, and the blend of clarinet and accordion on the other, enabled me to create, where required, a rich orchestral or “furry” sound, while the guitar (used solo only once) had the effect of sweetening the piano and bass. The thrust of the score was slightly nostalgic and bittersweet. Generally it was designed to play against the picture, rather than underscoring or forcing the surface emotions of the scenes.

This playing against proved a great communication challenge for Jill and myself. She was worried that I was going to get romantically sloppy and create a 1950 Italian tearjerker-type score with these instruments for her essentially dry, modernist film. From my end, I had to deal with the fact that music doesn’t make subtle moods; it makes strong moods. When you average two moods together hoping for something in between, you often get nothing. So the issue was not so much *what* the music was going to be but *what* the sandwich of picture, dialogue, and sound was

**In composing a score for *Waiting for the Moon*, Jill Godmilow’s film on Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas, author Michael Sahl devised a full-sounding acoustic soundtrack with relatively few instruments.**

Photo: Maryse Alberti, courtesy Skouras Pictures





The score for *Adam Clayton Powell* was economically built from pseudo-examples of jazz and gospel tunes from the period.

Courtesy Direct Cinema



going to be and what place music would have in that sandwich. In the end, because of the smart, sometimes arch dialogue of the film, coupled with the distance generated by the rather formal shooting and cutting style, I could get away with some romantic cues.

But how to know beforehand how affective those cues would be when dealing with only a rough piano track? I had recently done (as arranger and pianist) two records for Nonesuch called *The Tango Project*. Using these records, Jill and I were able to verify that, mixed at the right level, even the most soulful, gypsiesque violin playing would pull against, but not destroy, the dry character of what was on the screen. The soulfulness delivered a sense of inexpressible or forbidden emotions behind the wisecracks of Gertrude and Alice and significantly deepened the text.

In a more recent example, *Adam Clayton Powell*, directed by Richard Kilberg, the problem was very different. This is the story of a very nervy, gifted, and tragic individual who dared the system to do its worst and suffered the terrible consequences of being, as he put it, "the first bad nigger in Congress." The "manifest" nature of the score was to be a kind of "jazz history," coincident with the active part of Powell's life as a black minister and Congressman. It also had to underline certain aspects of the Civil Rights Movement—the part that Powell had led and the part that passed him by. In a much more covert way than in *Waiting for the Moon*, the score's psychological work had to be done not by telling the audience how to feel, but by getting the audience to bring its own feelings to the screen.

In effect, we made a crypto-underscore built on pseudo-examples of jazz, which I wrote. (The

original jazz recordings were way out of range of the grant-funded budget.) The biggest "fake" was the main and end title music—a bastard gospel tune that never was nor will be sung at the Abyssinian Baptist Church. But as film music, it was just what the doctor ordered. As the big cadence opens up under an elderly woman saying how there would never be anybody like Powell, it was extremely effective.

As always, the music budget of the film was disastrously small. I organized a band of clarinet (doubling for sax), trumpet, piano, bass, and drums, plus me, the composer, making "organ music" on—yes—the synthesizer. The track sounds full, as does the score of *Moon*, causing one to reflect that harmony and instrumentation have as much to do with the sensation of bigness as a plentitude of tracks.

The synthesizer, with its midis, is a great machine, capable of terrific things. It has practically created a new kind of music of its own. But it isn't, and cannot be, a human rock group, a human jazz quintet, or a chamber ensemble. And it might not be the right source of music for your film. If you have other needs, I urge you not to settle, but to call a composer and find out that you could have exactly what you want in living music and afford it too.

*Michael Sahl writes crossover music, related to both Romantic music and jazz. His most recent film scores are Waiting for the Moon and Adam Clayton Powell; his Symphony 1988 was performed at Lincoln Center, and his newest opera, Dream Beach, was heard on WNYC-FM on February 18, 1991.*

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# The Ethics of Community Media

A FILMMAKER CONFRONTS THE CONTRADICTIONS OF PRODUCING MEDIA  
ABOUT AND FOR A COMMUNITY WHERE SHE IS BOTH AN INSIDER AND OUTSIDER



Who is the community? Barrio residents comment on the issues in *AIDS in the Barrio*.

FRANCES NEGRON-MUNTANER

WHEN MEDIA PROFESSIONALS ASK, "HOW CAN WE AWAKEN THEM (communities with little or no political power) to the potential of media?" we assume a patronizing position. As a Puerto Rican and lesbian film/videomaker, I am aware of the double bind of being both part of the power (as a professional) and marginalized by it (as a cultural and sexual Other), and the effects of these contradictions in the power relationships one establishes with communities that we claim as our own.

In the course of my work as a mediamaker—particularly as coproducer of *AIDS in the Barrio* (a 29-minute documentary on the social, economic, and cultural context of the AIDS crisis in Philadelphia's Latino community)—I have faced a number of situations that point to the contradictions that not only so-called minority filmmakers confront but many politically invested filmmakers as well. By examining this experience, I hope to raise some questions about the relationship between filmmakers and "communities" perceived to be unempowered. It is important to ask these questions if mediamakers are to avoid reproducing the power structures we amply criticize in our works and our discourse as independents.

Despite our often casual and imprecise use of the term "community," it is no accident that we tend to choose this word when speaking about groups with a unempowered relationship to dominant power structures. Thus, we refer to the black community, the Latino community, the gay community,

and the women's community. We never say the men's community, the white community, or the middle-class community. We say the independent community but only mention Hollywood by its single name. Because the former "communities" are also composed of other "communities," or sectors, which also entail power relationships, the term falls short of describing the multiplicity of experience within these groups. Because the concept of community remains imprecise, I will be as specific as possible when referring to my own experience. When I do use the word community, I am employing an abstract notion that refers to a group of people who have both been identified and self-identified as members of a distinct group because of their relationship to dominant political structures and similar (but not homogeneous) ways

of coping with those structures.

The making of *AIDS in the Barrio* was motivated by personal experience. Alba Martínez, who eventually became coproducer of the film, lost a close relative to AIDS in 1986. At that time, we were living together in the Puerto Rican sector of North Philadelphia and were both active in community politics. Alba is a Community Legal Services lawyer, and I was working for a newspaper based in the community. As information about AIDS became more accessible, we realized that, despite the low numbers of reported AIDS cases among Latinos living in Philadelphia, Puerto Ricans were going to be hit by the epidemic in a severe way, and Alba was becoming increasingly frustrated by the increased bureaucratization of AIDS service organizations. Since I knew that film can function as a form of activism, we decided that we could make a modest contribution regarding the AIDS crisis and develop a tool that would also address other issues—nonmedical ones—which, as women and (in my case) gay activists, we saw as key.

Early in the process these issues were identified as the political economy of the drug trade, women's subordination, and the double standard of sexuality, as well as the effects of deeply rooted homophobia. At first we intended to produce an informational piece because we—along with most of the print media we came across—believed that the Latino community did not have sufficient AIDS prevention information. But we were quickly disabused of this idea when we went out with a video camera and asked people what information they had about AIDS. To our amazement, our interviewees *did* have information about AIDS. What they didn't seem to have was a practice which acted upon the information.



**Top: A man condemns homosexuality as unnatural. Bottom: An out-of-the-closet Latino gay man interviewed in *AIDS in the Barrio*.**

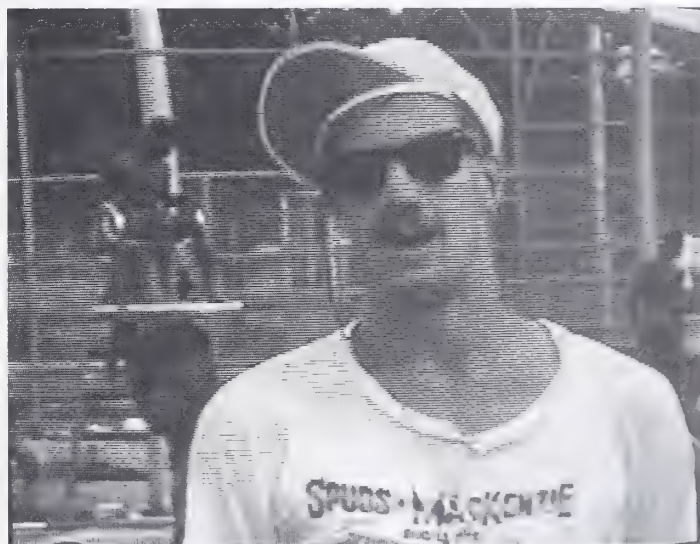
At this point some questions regarding my initial comments concerning "community" reappear. Here we were, middle-class, US-educated, Island-raised Puerto Rican women. Were we part of the "community"? Just because we had good intentions, the ability to tap into resources, and cross-class alliances with the Puerto Rican community, did we have the right to tell people what they should be doing? Were the obstacles preventing implementation of AIDS prevention only evident from a relative distance? How did this film become "community media" when its origins were and were not in the "community"?

And there was another aspect of this venture. We wanted to make a film, but we didn't know how. I was in film school but was not yet capable of handling a big production. Since Alba worked full-time, it was obvious that we needed to form a team. A Puerto Rican film student from Temple, David Cochran, expressed interest in contributing the technical skills, while Alba and I started writing what we thought was a convincing proposal. Although it was a skeleton, the project was brought to the attention of David Haas, who became the executive producer. Then Cochran left Philadelphia, and we hired Peter Biella, an experienced independent filmmaker—and another white man—to assemble a crew and serve as codirector. Now our core was complete. We later added a group of community activists and health professionals as consultants to guarantee some feedback from the potential professional users of this film.

At that point, the people involved in making the major decisions either had no previous relationship to the community or had a professional relationship to this community. This last characteristic does not mean that people were necessarily disconnected from the community's general problems. But it does mean that when we wanted to remove ourselves from the problems of the community, we could. If, as professionals, we were burnt out or wanted to move into more "mainstream" jobs, we could. If, as residents of the barrio, we wanted to buy a house in a middle-class, graffiti and drug free neighborhood, it was within our reach. Many of the participants in our project did not have these options.

As production progressed and we began to spend long hours in the "community" searching for the subjects of the film, two things occurred. I understood that this was a film being made about AIDS in the Puerto Rican community and was not a film coming from the community. We had a clear agenda of what we wanted and went out to get it. For example, if the average opinion of people in the barrio was that homosexuality was wrong, we opted for the definitely minority opinion that it is *not* wrong and proceeded to prove it. If this was a "community" production, why didn't it reflect the community's sentiments? Again, the question became: Who is the community?

Likewise, is it ethically questionable to structure a section on women's subordination with statements made by men who had no idea we were going to make them look like fools? Or did it really matter that they were sexist? In sorting out these dilemmas, the politics of power became extremely complicated. It became a struggle between class, gender, and sexual orientation. And class lost. By virtue of the power (even if somewhat limited) we had as middle-class professionals, we used the images and voices of working-class men to make our point—at their expense. In several instances, this meant that we used "bites" to articulate the film's position



instead of a statement that would render a particular person's views more complex or ambiguous. In one scene we never hinted that the man who boasts, "Men can have 80,000 women, but women can't," said this with his wife's assent after the whole film crew begged her to give it. Or that, after saying that her church disapproved of homosexuals, the pentecostalist young woman quickly added, "My God, I must have sounded terribly prejudiced!" Through all such experiences and much retrospective thinking, what I discovered was that power is the main issue in making any film or video: power to be able to gather the resources to make and later distribute and effectively exhibit the work, power to convince others—many of whom have nothing to gain from the experience—to participate, power to make decisions, and power to talk back to the screen after the film was completed.

However, many of my fears about misrepresentation and unequal power relationships regarding the subjects of the film almost evaporated when *AIDS in the Barrio* finally was completed and we attended screenings. Both in screenings at community centers in the Puerto Rican community and other alternative media centers, we found that the people we wished to represent did feel well represented. Comments from participants, community activists, and family members affirmed that our struggle to adequately portray what we saw as the various contexts for the spread of AIDS was successful for these sectors of the community. This didn't mean, however, that everyone who saw the film felt that being gay was acceptable.

As I continued to attend screening after screening, though, I became aware that the work hardly ever met with negative comments in Philadelphia but received more criticism outside the city. Most of this criticism centered on the gay section, which some gay and lesbian activists saw as not



# What to Wear (Because t A C

ELLEN SPIRO

sufficiently empowering, since we did not feature a politically active gay spokesperson. Unlike Latino gay activism in other major US cities, notably New York, however, most Latino gay men and lesbians in Philadelphia are still very closeted, notwithstanding some individual exceptions. Additionally, several Latino mediamakers took issue with depictions of male Latino drug dealers and machos, because they thought this confirmed dangerous stereotypes when presented to a non-Latino audience. These critics believed the film could be used well with audiences in the community, but outside the work might function as a doubled-edged sword. A third, and important, criticism came from sectors of the white liberal community, including filmmakers, who believed that the commentary in *AIDS in the Barrio* is too didactic. This strategy was hotly debated within our production group, and our solution was a compromise. Some of us felt that this type of commentary was necessary, while others thought it would eventually limit the film, since some audiences might find the film preachy.

The differences between these responses and those we encountered in Philadelphia are probably linked to the work's status as the first film in recent memory that presents Puerto Ricans in the city with images of themselves, related to the immediate concerns of their own lives—even when these images are partial. A woman who works in the Pennsylvania prison system noted that she had shown the film to 300 inmates; that they asked to see the film again and again because it was about them. At that point I understood that, in addition to the film's potential for AIDS education, it also represented an important step in creating the possibility for Philadelphia's Puerto Rican community to make images about themselves. This was underscored at one of the community events, when a teenager asked us why we hadn't included the issue of pregnancy and children. We answered that despite the importance of these issues, we couldn't address everything in one tape. Her answer was revealing: "Then I'll make it. If these two women who are barely five years older than I am can produce a film, why can't I?"

From these and other experiences, I have concluded that what makes *AIDS in the Barrio* community media is its reception and use. Because of our arrangement with the city of Philadelphia, all Philadelphia residents have a right to a free copy of the film, and many people have made an effort to obtain one and pass it on. Could *AIDS in the Barrio* or a similar work have been made another way and receive the same level of community support? Must all work on the project be community-based—from conception to distribution—to be a community film? Is it good enough if the work is not made in consultation with a community but is embraced by the community nevertheless?

This is where the power of talking back is crucial. If the "communities" we belong to and/or work with had that power, most of these questions would be irrelevant. Both "insiders" and "outsiders" could produce media "about" any community, so long as the maker revealed her or his position in relation to that community. Tell us where are you coming from, and don't assume you are producing Film Truth.

*Frances Negrón-Muntaner is a writer and mediamaker who lives in Philadelphia.*

The world is in the early stages of a revolution that it has barely begun to understand. Recently, television has begun falling into the hands of the people.

—Ted Koppel, *Revolution in a Box*, an ABC special

ACTIVISTS HAVE BEEN APPROPRIATING FILM AND VIDEO TOOLS FOR THEIR own ends ever since they have been available, but during the current camcorder boom even more people are acquiring the tools and constructing their own representations. What follows is a sketch of how this new video activist movement, centered heavily on collective production, is happening and how you can be a part of the action.

## WHY SHOOT ACTIVISM?

Besides being fun, stimulating, and personally fulfilling, video documentation of activist events in the camcorder/VCR/public access TV age benefits the movements you care about and extends your issues to people who may lack alternative information. It gives you the power of self-representation, whether or not the news is covering a particular event. And the practical uses for documentation are extensive.

### COUNTERSURVEILLANCE

Historically video has acted both as a deterrent and a witness to violence. The phrase made famous at the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago—"The whole world is watching"—may have even more relevance today with the proliferation of camcorders. Shooting a violent police officer's badge number and saying her or his name aloud into the camera is an effective technique to let the cops know that they, too, are being watched. During the Tompkins Square Park riots in New York City in 1988, video activists Clayton Patterson and Paul Garrin shot extensive footage of officers *without* badges beating anti-gentrification demonstrators, which they provided to TV news programs and the courts. This video documentation became an effective legal tool in prosecuting the officers and defending falsely charged demonstrators.

In Atlanta, Georgia, healthcare advocates took over the office of a Center for Disease Control bureaucrat and demanded a change in the Center's definition of AIDS to include infections specific to women. One security officer repeatedly lunged at individuals and camcordists. Luckily, two camcordists were videotaping the protesters and each other, effectively keeping the cameras and tape from being illegally confiscated. Shut in the office with no mainstream press in sight, they recorded the only footage that would protect the activists.

### ANALYSIS

Camcorder footage contributes to a broader analysis of an event by offering an alternative to broadcast media's centrist view. It has the power to add a dimension to the chorus of voices heard, providing a platform for seasoned activists and concerned community members, rather than the same old authoritative experts giving their same old scripted raps. Community and activist documentation opens up the possibility of a diverse range of



# on Your Video Activist Outing e Whole World Is Watching) ICORDIST'S MANIFESTO



Latex gloves, such as this police officer is wearing at an ACT-UP demonstration, are a fashion no-no.

Courtesy Ellen Spiro

of legitimation which ultimately is an empowering device. With insider's documentation, your group does not have to rely on mainstream media approval for legitimation. In fact, it is useful to consider what was *not* reported by the dominant press to analyze media coverage.

## WHAT TO WEAR

What you wear to a demonstration is as important as the creative and technical elements of demo documentation. AIDS activists show off their fashion consciousness with a chant frequently shouted at latex-gloved cops who spread AIDSphobia with a tasteless fashion statement implying that AIDS is transmitted by casual contact: "Your gloves don't match your shoes. You'll see it on the news." If you are going to wear gloves to an action—a good idea in cold weather—wear wool or cotton, not latex. Also, get comfortable for a lot of running around. Prepare for being too warm or too cold by carrying a small backpack with some extra clothes. These can also be used to wrap up your camera if necessary.

How you dress may affect whether you can get past police lines. But there are times you may be blocked from an important moment whether you are perceived as a hardcore activist or as an ABC News clone, with or without credentials. In such cases you will need contingency plans. Invent some techniques and props to make the most of your mobility, like the camcorder boom pole—using a regular still camera monopod screwed into your camera bottom so that it can be hoisted high above crowds, police lines, and enormous press crews for a bird's eye view. It helps to have a rotating viewfinder that you can look through from a distance, but it can also be done without looking through the lens at all.

## BIGGER IS NOT NECESSARILY BETTER.

A small camcorder or "palmcorder" and a backpack give you tremendous mobility. You can climb onto vans, phone booths, or trees for wide shots. They also give you the option of participating in an action on many levels. With a backpack you can take breaks from shooting and demonstrate. If the event is well covered, you may find yourself battling with a 500-pound aggressive news crew for a shot. Instead of shoving them back (common behavior among news crews), crawl under their legs and squeeze around them or use the camcorder/boom pole method to shoot over their heads.

## BE YOUR OWN TED KOPPEL

An anchorperson or correspondent acts as a valuable conduit of information to viewers. In Athens, Ohio, Nan Merkyl, an elderly camcorder, shot a rainy protest at the Dugout Lounge, a bar where the Basic Animal Rights Coalition was demonstrating against bear wrestling entertainment shows. As an off-camera reporter, Merkyl humanized her footage with commentary and questions. At the Stop the Church demonstration at Saint Patrick's Cathedral in New York, when AIDS activists protested Cardinal O'Connor's



speakers on a subject, countering the myth that there are only two sides to an issue.

## EMPOWERMENT

Video activists get involved in events. So-called objective news gatherers tend to be uninvolved in the whole of an event and remain ignorant of the depth of issues, falling for ready-made media events and simplistic summaries. By being involved you can create media that is passionate, informed, complex, and empowering to the people in your movement. If press coverage and public reaction to an event becomes highly negative, an independent video corrective reminds participants that an action may have been successful even if it was not widely portrayed as such. Video is a form





opposition to condom distribution programs and the Church's prohibition against reproductive freedom, Ray Navarro arrived as everyone's favorite anchorsavior—Jesus—representing the Fire and Brimstone Network (FBN). Armed with an FBN microphone, this anchorsavior provided video activists with priceless news footage delivered by a guy who has an even higher reputation for delivering the Truth than Ted Koppel.

#### VEHICULAR VIDEO

Taking yourself seriously as a video interventionist may eventually require some sophisticated tools. In Buffalo, New York, the 8mm News Collective, a group of small format producers, acquired a cheap school bus. The collective follows mainstream news crews from their TV station to their destination with the mission of deconstructing their newsgathering process through documentation and intervention. They recently painted their bus chroma-key blue, so that if they are being pursued by authorities, they can simply push a button and disappear.

#### BE PREPARED TO GET ARRESTED

If you are involved in a demonstration as a video activist, your agenda will be clear and the authorities may pick up on that and try to sweep you away. At other times, there is still the possibility that you will be arrested along with those participating in civil disobedience. One WHAM! (Women's Health Action and Mobilization!) video activist, Julie Clark, was documenting a clash between the WHAM! Clinic Defense and Operation Rescue anti-abortionists, who were blockading a health clinic. She was arrested, then thrown in jail with a pack of fetus fetishists singing religious songs off-key. So, before a demonstration begins, arrange for a friend to take your camera and tapes in case you are arrested. If that person is unavailable at the time of your arrest, hand the camera to someone you know or pack it in your backpack, keeping track of it if you go through the system. Remember, fearlessness is risky, but it will get you great shots.

**Documenting civil disobedience actions, such as WHAM!'s Operation Ridiculous, lets arresting officers know that they, too, are being watched.**

Courtesy DIVA-TV

#### A DIVA-TV press pass

Courtesy DIVA-TV



#### CREDENTIALS

There are two kinds of press passes: official police passes issued by the city, which allow you to cross police lines, and organizational press passes, which could be anything from a self-created pass to an CBS News pass. Press identification does wonders for your mobility, but sometimes it can get you caught in a media trap. At the Stop the Church demonstration, the

people who used their DIVA TV (Damned Interfering Video Activist TV) passes to get inside the church were herded to a tiny press area out of sight of the main event, a quiet "die-in" by 50 activists in the center aisle of St. Patrick's Cathedral. The press and media activists were only able to get shots of the few individuals shouting on pews. The most visually profound action of the day was not in view. However, the DIVAs who entered as church-goers got great footage from their pews. The footage of one video activist, Suzanne Wright, was aired on a national news station accompanied by a "courtesy DIVA" credit.

#### ORGANIZE WITH OTHER VIDEOMAKERS

Information exchange among imagemakers and activists is vital. Video activists should organize among themselves, whether producing a collaborative project, looking out for each other at an event, or coordinating complete documentation. Organizing insures that important events get recorded. Video collectives like the Black Cat Collective in Jay, Maine, a labor activist group, and the Bay Area Coalition Against Operation Rescue in Berkeley are increasingly popping up. The Deep Dish Satellite Network and Paper Tiger TV recently coordinated the *Gulf Crisis TV Project* television series. This intensive effort involved anti-war videomakers from 40 states, including such locales as Ashland, Oregon; Castlewood, Virginia; Whitehall, Wisconsin; Ames, Iowa; Honolulu, Hawaii; and Bloomington, Indiana.

As a result of camcorders, public access television, cable, and satellite, new forms of activist video and the outlets for it are expanding—and it is just beginning. Ted Koppel has every reason to be worried. Who will want to watch *him* during this expansive proliferation of grassroots, face-to-face media?

*Ellen Spiro is a videomaker and writer currently living in New York City. Her most recent work is DiAna's Hair Ego: AIDS Info Up Front.*



# Hi-8

## High Powered, Low Priced

LARRY LOEWINGER

**I**N THE VIDEO WORLD, HI-8 IS THE BUZZ WORD. "IF YOU REALLY KNOW WHAT you are doing, you shoot hi-8 carefully and light adequately. You use a one-chip or, better yet, a three-chip camera. You can make your piece look like a more expensive production. Hi-8 democratizes videomaking." So says video/filmmaker David Leitner. Linda Mevorach, a director of commercials, mostly shot in 35mm, was drawn to hi-8 because she wanted to do personal projects. She recently explained that working in hi-8 meant she could do the camerawork herself. "It was something I could wrap my arms around and have complete control," she added. When I interviewed Jon Alpert of Downtown Community Television, he remarked, "If tomorrow we had to go to some remote location, I would seriously consider using hi-8." Shortly afterward, in the middle of the Persian Gulf air war, he took hi-8 equipment to Iraq.

Hi-8 is an improved version of Sony's consumer 8mm video format. Most people are saying nice things, even lauding this format, a few are badmouthing it, but everyone is talking. The cameras are small—depending on the model, they can be tiny—the sound quality is impressive, and the picture quality can be surprisingly good. Most of all, the equipment is cheap. Even the top of the line hi-8 camera, Sony's DXC-327, which offers 700 lines of resolution at 60 db signal-to-noise ratio, costs about \$11,000 with deck, compared to the cheapest professional half-inch cameras, which start at \$30,000.

Sony, the central player in the development of hi-8, claims that the format should not be compared to half-inch, let alone one-inch equipment. Others outside of Sony are making claims that Sony itself shrinks from. When it comes to designing equipment, Sony has often become a victim of its own ingenuousness. In the early seventies, when Sony introduced three-quarter-inch video equipment, the manufacturer claimed it wasn't suitable for broadcast purposes. Very quickly, the broadcast video world proved Sony wrong. Years later, Sony introduced a cassette digital audio tape format (DAT), insisting it was for the consumer market. Consumers stayed away, but the professional audio world fell in love with DAT. Now we have hi-8 video. It, too, was intended as a consumer format. Tell that to the networks, record companies, commercial directors, industrial videomakers, and, most of all, the documentarians who are eating up hi-8. Much of the news emanating from the Gulf war was shot on hi-8. Several segments of *The 90's*, a recent independent magazine show on public television, were shot on hi-8.

What is hi-8? What can it do for you? Like all other video formats, hi-8 is helical scan.<sup>1</sup> Hi-8 video is recorded as a composite, color-under signal on special 8mm cassettes which are either metal particle or metal evaporated tape.<sup>2</sup> In the color-under recording process, according to Leitner, "As you begin to duplicate hi-8, color starts to fall apart. Anyone who has cut



**Video artist Kathy High chose hi-8 for her tape  
*Not So Ancient History.***

*Courtesy videomaker*

standard three-quarter-inch tape is aware of the blurring of reds. That is the result of the color-under system." Even though NTSC one-inch video is recorded as a composite signal, it does not suffer from this problem. Nor does Betacam, which is component video. To stabilize the video signal, the more expensive cameras have built-in time base correctors, making it easier to transfer. Depending on the complexity and/or cost of the camera, the audio is either AFM (hi-fi) or digital, mono or stereo.<sup>3</sup> The costly cameras generate time code, but—and this important—it is not SMPTE time code. For editing and release, most hi-8 users transfer their tapes to a larger format.

There are several options for bumping up. Sony would prefer that you go to three-quarter-inch. According to Mel Porter, a marketing manager for the company, "We positioned hi-8 as an acquisition format for three-quarter-inch U-matic SP. Three-quarter-inch SP was designed in part to be the postproduction format for hi-8." What he is saying is that these two formats were designed for each other. You can shoot on hi-8 and transfer, edit, and release on this improved version of three-quarter-inch.

Three-quarter-inch technology has been with us for some 20 years. While it now seems cumbersome and a little clunky, three-quarter was considered the height of portability, compared to two-inch Quad, then the standard broadcast and editing format. Once again Sony's design skills overwhelmed their predictive ability. Two-inch Quad was soon replaced by one-inch helical. Three-quarter-inch, which Sony designed for the consumer market, became the standard off-line editing format. There are at least a million, possibly several million, U-matic machines in use around the world. In the eighties, as half-inch technology grew popular and other manufacturers of U-matics stopped making them, Sony's choice was simple: abandon the U-matic or improve it. The appearance of hi-8 provided the perfect opportunity for Sony to mate the miniature with the reliable. In Sony's eyes, if half-inch



# Hi-8



The Sony DXC-325 hi-8 camera (left) and EVO-9100 hi-8 camcorder

Courtesy Sony

equipment is for the broadcast world, then hi-8 and three-quarter-inch SP are for industrial users.

SP improves upon regular three-quarter-inch video in several ways. Resolution is increased from 270 to 340 lines. The luminance frequencies are moved upward. This results in a 30 percent increase in horizontal detail. The upward shift also means that the luminance and chrominance frequencies are further apart.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, there is less interference between the two. Compared to digital and AFM audio tracks, which are buried in the video signal, the longitudinal sound tracks run parallel to the diagonally recorded video. They are accessible for frame to frame cuts. AFM tracks are not. AFM audio, while of superior quality, does not lend itself to editing. Moreover, to improve the existing U-matic audio tracks, Sony added Dolby C noise reduction to the audio circuitry of the SP decks.

They also introduced a high energy oxide tape formulation instead of going directly to metal tape, which would have created compatibility problems. This makes SP compatible with regular three-quarter-inch equipment. Perhaps most telling about Sony's intended marriage of hi-8 and SP was the appearance of hi-8 recorder/players with a quasi-component output connector (the S connector), which is also available on U-matic decks. Although hi-8 is a composite signal, it can output a semi-component signal called YC that provides noticeably better quality video—better detail and picture rendition—than the normal composite output.

Clearly, hi-8 is suited to a multitude of purposes and users with a range of budgets and needs. Ron Stanford directs medical and industrial tapes and films in Philadelphia. He recently completed a piece which, when he neared completion of the edit, he felt needed a few extra shots. He took his home Canon hi-8 camera and got the material. Since the show was shot on Beta SP, he merely bumped up the hi-8 pieces to Beta. To complete the project he went one more step to one-inch. Although he noticed the difference between the different sources, others could not. "The weak part," he added, "is when you are in high-contrast situations. There you know they are not from the same sources. You can tell the difference. However, if the lighting was pretty even and somewhat flat, the different formats blended surprisingly well."

Like many others, Stanford uses his camera for scouting. Sony offers an editing deck, the EVO-720, for those who want to do their postproduction in hi-8. A scouting tape may require only light editing and then can be released in the form of a video memo. According to Porter of Sony, hi-8 postproduction "is for people who don't have to go down many generations and who don't have to build an edit decision list. These are people who need the final product quickly."

For many corporations, especially those that are media savvy, hi-8 is very attractive for the low end of their media production. Warner Brothers

Records uses hi-8 for its press kits and even for some low budget music videos. When they shoot a video on hi-8 for eventual broadcast, they go the high end route. The source material gets transferred on the EVO-9800, a deck designed for cross format transfers, to the digital composite video format, D2. Off-line edit masters are made on three-quarter-inch. The D2 copy now becomes the source. With time code on both three-quarter-inch and D2 it is easy to conform one to the other. John Beug, a Los Angeles-based Warner executive, has a hi-8 viewer sitting in his office. "It's an effective tool for us as a record company," he says. "I can send someone out to find out what the act looks like. Then I just review the stuff."

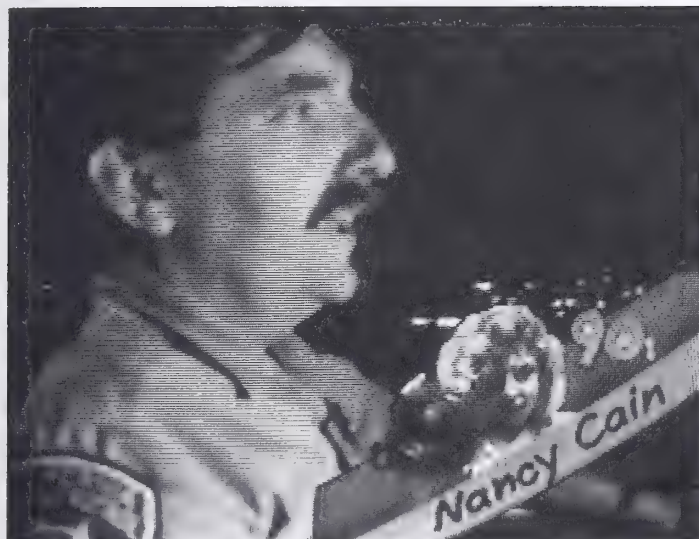
One of the pioneers in the documentary and industrial end of hi-8 in New York City is Eric Solstein. When he first saw hi-8 a few years ago, he thought it looked better than Betacam. "After closely examining it," he decided that "it can be made to look nearly as good, but it will not replace Betacam from the point of view of quality. However, in a ratio of quality to cost and size, it beats out every other format." Solstein, like many hi-8 enthusiasts, is keenly aware of the downside in working in this format.

The size of hi-8 is its greatest virtue—and its greatest drawback. According to Solstein, "We are waiting for the engineering to catch up with the problems that the scale of the format introduces. When you say hi-band, you are talking about higher frequencies. These frequencies need higher writing speeds. More information requires a smaller head gap and very closely packed particles on your tape stock. Losing a little bit of particle has a correspondingly greater impact on your image." All of this translates into the fact that using hi-8 in the professional realm requires precision in the operation of equipment that you shouldn't ask of consumer-based products. As a consequence, there are occasions when hi-8 just doesn't deliver.

If size and quality are what attract users to hi-8, what happens when the equipment size increases exponentially in order to improve both image and sound quality? The new hi-8 three-chip cameras, like the DXC-325 and the DXC-327, are lighter than their Betacam cousins, but not much, and are similar to the larger cameras in most respects, including technical specifications and physical features. For some, Solstein among them, the professionalization of hi-8 means something has been lost. "The size of a hi-8 camera," Solstein adds, "allows you to be a tourist. Your inhibitions, as well as the inhibitions of your subject, are much relieved by the lack of technology. Also, you can take a hi-8 camera and gaff it to something. If it falls off what have you lost? Not 30 grand. Hi-8 cameras are great because they are expendable."

In the eighties, under the influence of music videos and what the advertising world perceived as documentary film style, commercials gravitated towards an emphasis on imagery, design, feelings, and away from conventional narrative. The grain, the shaky image, the relentless editing structure—all of which might be called stylized reality—became the





Sgt. Gordon Graham explains the impact of drinking on driving in Nancy Cain's *California Highway Patrol*, one of several hi-8 tapes included in the public TV magazine program *The 90's*.

An expatriate undergoes a hazing in Eric Solstein's hi-8 tape *Expat: Bangkok*, shot with Sony's EVO-9100 camera.

Courtesy videomaker



commercial film language of the last decade. Why degrade expensive 35mm film when you have available a brand new, inexpensive technology? Bring up the new technology rather than drag down the old. Especially when, if hi-8 is used under the right conditions, it can be made to look like film. It didn't take long for someone to figure out that hi-8's deficits could be turned into attributes, but it wasn't easy convincing the agencies, who professed to be desperate to save money, that spending less might produce as good, if not a better, product.

"I saw two converging points that would have to meet," claims commercial director John Bonanno. "One is a very inexpensive way to do high level work, intersecting with the the problem of economic recession where agencies and clients can no longer spend the money they have been spending. Sooner or later these two points would have to cross," he adds. Bonanno began his career shooting and directing documentaries. One day, after he had made the move to commercials, he visited a friend who was making industrials and experimenting with the then new 8mm format. He was struck right away with its possibilities, particularly the potential to ape the look of film without going through with the elaborate degradation it takes to make 35mm film seem grainy and fuzzy. Bonanno bought a camera and began shooting. He visited advertising agencies, championing 8mm and then hi-8. Initially they resisted. He next produced a couple of spots on spec. Finally, one agency took the plunge.

I recorded sound on one of the first spots Bonanno did for broadcast. By then he had graduated to Sony's high end consumer camera, the V-5000. His friend, the industrial filmmaker, was shooting second camera with another V-5000 camera. There was a regular, if reduced, union film crew doing the things a crew normally does except in one area: lighting. In a sense, there was none. Instead of boosting the lighting throughout the day we were engaged in the game of shrinking it. A few cards were used to reflect or redirect the light, but no lighting instrument was ever employed. Later on Bonanno insisted, "In terms of content, working in hi-8 is different than shooting in a larger format. Because there isn't as much at stake the attitude of the agency is different. Though they are getting a high-end product the client is calmer, because he is not spending as much money. For the actor there is the possibility of a different kind of performance because there isn't as much going on around him. There is a greater opportunity for spontaneity. That's what filmmaking should be about."

Hi-8 is the democratic alternative for videomakers. Almost everyone can afford it. By shrinking the cost and technical scrim between maker and subject it can bring the viewer in more intimate contact with the work. Hi-8 is both a means of recording information and, because of its cost and accessibility, a serious motivational tool for beginning the creative process.

*Larry Loewinger is a film producer, sound engineer, and journalist.*

## NOTES

1. The helical scan method records signal on videotape on the diagonal with a rotating (helical) head. Though the tape speed is moderate, the head spins at a very high speed. Consequently, a large amount of information can be recorded (written) on small cassettes. Remember the size of two-inch video reels?
2. Composite video combines the luminance, chrominance, and sync signals in one area. Component video separates them on individual bands of the recording area of the videotape. The only common component video system in the United States is half-inch. Most people will agree that with half the image width half-inch Beta or MII compare very favorably with one-inch composite.
3. AFM means audio frequency modulation. This kind of analog audio is recorded within the video signal, making it difficult to edit. It does offer impressive fidelity. Hi-fi is the consumer name for AFM.
4. Luminance, called Y, refers to the information in the video signal that is used to record brightness levels. It is also that portion of the video signal that allows for compatibility between color and black and white. The chrominance portion of video signal, called C, provides the color information.

## BETWEEN IRONY AND EMPATHY

### Peter Rose's New Video Installation

REGULA PICKEL

Film- and videomaking sometimes challenges one's creativity and courage. Artist Peter Rose literally walks a tightrope in his work. He recently scaled Philadelphia's Benjamin Franklin Bridge to shoot footage on a narrow cable pathway at dizzying heights for the opening piece of his commemorative video installation, *Ben Franklin Dreams of His Immortal Soul* (a current events reading room apparatus). Rose was one of six Philadelphia artists commissioned by the Electri-

Benjamin Franklin was the focal point for all festival events and the subject of different biographic interpretations by numerous artists, among them Nam June Paik, Ron Kuivila, and Joan Logue. Initially Rose approached his portrait in the deconstructive mode characteristic of his earlier work based on language. In the end, however, he arrived at an innovative homage to the breadth of interests of the founding father and statesman. The complex result is elegantly resolved in a three-channel, multi-monitor video installation.

The Ben Franklin piece is the fourth in a series of installations by Rose, following *Babel*, *Siren*, and *Foit Yet Cleem Triavith*, where the monitors are placed in triptych formation. The central monitor represents "The Immortal Soul" itself, displaying a mock vertical flow of current in black and white. This is flanked by two monitors, which repeat a cycle of seven short stories relating to Franklin's life and work. Another tiny monitor is placed close to the viewer on a low table, in vertical alignment with the "Immortal Soul." It enlarges the triptych to a kite-like constellation and features a little girl flying a kite in stormy weather. This intuitive image anchors the piece, with the child literally holding the installation together by the thread in her hands.

Rose likes the triptych as much for its formal aspects of balance and symmetry as for the "aura of spirituality" it lends to the display. "I find video installations more fulfilling than single channel pieces," says Rose, "since the added spatial dimension enhances both my creative possibilities and the involvement of the audience." At the same time, Rose is weary of what he calls the "installation game," in which venues often expect artists to furnish the equipment. Such a capital-intensive requirement effectively limits access to the installation world for a great number of independent film- and videomakers.

There are, of course, methods of raising money through grants and the sale of one's work. Rose, who is also a performance artist and heads the film program at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, supplements these different sources of revenue with occasional performances and lectures. Thus, he gets by with enough funds for each work-in-progress. Scarcity of means spurs inventiveness, and Rose has developed working methods that allow him to produce technically and aesthetically crafted work with basic equipment. The Franklin piece, for instance, was shot in half-inch and edited entirely in his home studio using Macintosh and Amiga computers. The



Peter Rose scaled the Benjamin Franklin Bridge in Philadelphia for a shot in his latest video installation, *Benjamin Franklin Dreams of His Immortal Soul*.

Courtesy videomaker

cal Matter Festival, a summer-long series of performing arts events and installations staged to commemorate the second centenary of Benjamin Franklin's death in 1790.

Hosted by the 75-year-old Print Club of Philadelphia, Rose's video work symbolizes the evolution from printmaking, Franklin's original profession, to the postmodern, electronic image environment. This was a sure sign that the festival, which drew its name from one of Franklin's papers on electricity, had succeeded in fostering local interest in the electronic arts.



project was completed on a low budget in six weeks of intense production.

With every work-in-progress, Rose collects extra footage and ideas that he incorporates into future pieces. Often he works on several projects at once to let themes interact and cross-fertilize. For new works, his ideas can be triggered by various stimuli—sound, light, color, text, speech—or by events in his personal life. Sometimes he is motivated by an obsession, an image or idea he pursues over a period of time, to introduce later in different shades and variations in a new piece.

One such obsession is the bridge—as witnessed by the footage shot in his balancing act high above the Golden Gate span for one of his most successful works, *The Man Who Could Not See Far Enough* (1981). Then there was his most recent climb on the Benjamin Franklin Bridge. He has also been obsessed with the labyrinth and its multiple allegoric references to the human brain, the womb, the voice, choices in life.... Most of *Siren* consists of a visual exploration of a maze set to narrations from the book *Green Mansion*, varying discordant voices and sounds.

Another of Rose's obsessions is the eclipse phenomenon, which is staged in the piece *Benjamin Franklin Dreams of His Immortal Soul* and alluded to by circular framing and afterimages of the fading circle on the screen. A new obsession may well be in the making. Seeking to portray *Benjamin Franklin Dreams of Erotic Bliss*, Rose discovered the sensual quality of string. Accompanied by Bach's *Concerto for Three Harpsichords* and intimately narrated passages (on business) from *Poor Richard's Almanac*, two hands carefully, sensuously guide strings into knots of various configurations against a backdrop of lush greenery. Like serpents gliding in a slow love game, these pieces of string take on a life of their own—a phenomenon which fascinates Rose.

Rose clearly enjoys his independence to create personal pieces that are not necessarily tied to a particular trend in video art. He sees his work as "playful and passionate," reflecting his belief that "we all skirt the edge of nonsense all the time." The disadvantage of this choice is that his work does not fit established categories and has been little understood. Rose began his artistic career by analyzing structural relations in film, creating complicated multiple images inspired by David Hockney. Later, he applied this same structural approach to time in *Analogies: Studies in the Movement of Time* (1977) and *Foit Yet Cleem Triavith* (1988). The main body of his work, however, is devoted to the theme of language—a collection he calls *Vox*. This series includes *Secondary Currents* and *The Pressures of the Text* (1983), *Digital Speech* (1984), *Babel* and *Genesis* (1987), and *Siren* (1990). The *Vox* cycle was inspired by the linguistic discipline of semiotics. In order to reveal the hidden subtexts of language, Rose decomposes speech into its acoustic, rhythmic, and visual components or sets up the verbal against the visual to create new meaning. If this sounds like a dry, analytical undertaking, Rose

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**Rose explores the sensual qualities of string in  
*Benjamin Franklin Dreams of  
His Immortal Soul.***

Courtesy videomaker

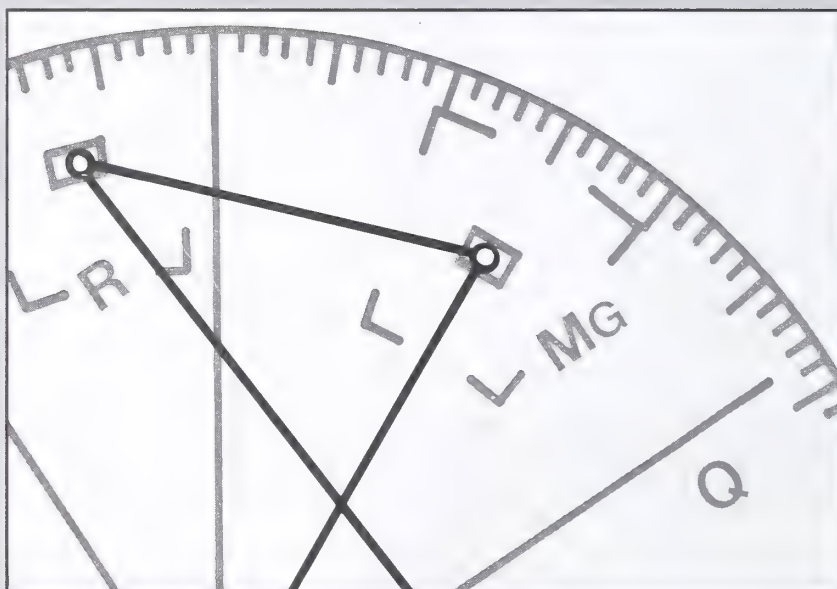
manages to approach it with imagination and wit, employing innovative yet simple tricks to make his work entertaining and attractive—even for the uninitiated.

Two tapes, *The Pressures of the Text* and *Digital Speech*, are performance pieces transferred to video. Rose still performs in his works—he makes frequent use of his vocal abilities, his face, and his hands—but is moving toward orchestrated pieces, where he directs rather than acts. He feels that the further removed from the action he is, the more spiritual his work becomes, a progression which may have spurred the evolution from single channel to installation pieces.

In that sense, the work commissioned by the Electrical Matter Festival proved to be a successful experiment. While the theme restricted Rose's freedom in determining his own subject, it also offered him a complex subject to explore with a certain detachment. Although reluctant to do a video portrait at first, Rose says he was won over by Franklin's ingenuity. There is, no doubt, a certain affinity of character between the two men, which may be summed up as curiosity or inventiveness. Imagination is certainly a key word for Rose, who ended up taking a rather irreverent approach to historic portraiture. "I discovered that from the 'Index' to Carl Van Doren's biography of Ben Franklin one could construct a network of ideas, a typology of Franklin's profoundly varied interests and activities," he says. The color-coded "Index" is placed on a low table in front of the viewer, encouraging a projection of "a historically-grounded pattern onto a set of contemporary images and to imagine Franklin as he might experience the world now."

With this approach, Rose manages to link past and present. He extrapolates a complex personality from a random selection of salient features in Van Doren's biography—"Research," "Invention," "Politics," "Mischief," "Electricity," "Women," and "Language." Alternating between irony and empathy—the two poles he distinguishes in life and art—Rose examines these key words in seven stories, all of which begin with "Ben Franklin dreams...." The complete 17-minute cycle is a centrifugal construction, a crossroads where all avenues Rose has explored earlier appear to merge and depart anew.

Rose readily explains some of the "tricks" he used in his latest work. In *Ben Franklin Dreams of an Instrument of Vision*, a scientific device intended to show the convective flow of current was filled with ice to make it react to the cold temperature, producing a yellow and blue image of ultrasonic quality. Rose's electronically inflected voice identifies the image as "an infrasonic picture of the fetus," and points to different body parts and



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signs of "neurological activity." This piece, color-coded "Research," links past and present experimental activities. It accomplishes this by combining a scientific instrument alluding to Franklin's electrical experiments with postmodern means of visualization.

In *Ben Franklin Dreams of Revolt*, Rose introduces the concept of a "digital mouth," created by quickly opening a closed fist in front of a camera pointed directly at the sun. The concentric bursts of light are then set to rhythmically corresponding utterances to fashion a mouth, which articulates a rebellious manifesto. This piece is color-coded "Politics."

Rose calls *Benjamin Franklin Dreams of His Immortal Soul* a series of juxtapositions devised to locate "intersections of the human voice and electrical phenomena." It is also an attempt at affirming the heroic from a postmodern, critical point of

view. As in his earlier work, Rose seeks the balance between irony and empathy, which leads him to gently mock the relative inadequacy of our visual and verbal conventions of representation.

*Regula Pickel is a freelance journalist and graduate student in media.*



The installation *Siren* is part of Rose's *Vox* cycle, which is indebted to the linguistic discipline of semiotics.

Courtesy videomaker

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RENEE TAJIMA

**What Memphis Needs** is a new 6-minute short by Alexis Krasilovsky, which contrasts the black and white cultures of Memphis, Tennessee. It is based on a poem written by the internationally renowned "prison poet" Etheridge Knight, written in the Free People's Poetry Workshop. The film provides a cross section of Memphis history and society, from white kids in a West Memphis parade throwing candy at black bystanders to a Bible reading in the Lorraine Motel, from ponies running through the Memphis cottonwoods to a girl running across the construction site of Mud Island, and from rock 'n' rollers to marquee lights on Beale Street. *What Memphis Needs*: New York Filmmakers' Cooperative, 175 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10016; (212) 889-3820.

Two Bay Area videomakers, Albert L. Marshall and Spencer Moon, have turned their tenure as artists-in-residence at the San Francisco County Jail at San Bruno into a video documentary entitled **Art from Jail**. The 53-minute program demonstrates the impact of art and its expression on the inmates through interviews with jail staff, artists, and former prisoners and through the examples of visual and fine art works produced by students in the program. An inmate named Mario talks about working with an acclaimed local actor on a performance piece, and his jail counselor talks about Mario's personal evolution. Writing instructor Gloria Frym reveals the process of seeing inmates become addicted to the pleasure of making art. And visual artists talk about tales of prisoners getting in touch with their native cultures beyond the prison walls. The jail arts program is sponsored by the California Arts Council, San Francisco Arts Commission Neighborhood Arts Program, and the San Francisco Sheriff's Department. *Art from Jail*: Ruth Morgan, Office of the Sheriff, Community Services Division; (415) 266-9500 or 841-4362.

The Harmonikeys warble a tune in  
Alexis Krasilovsky's six-minute film  
**What Memphis Needs**.

Courtesy filmmaker

From the gutters and back alleys of New York City comes **Shadows in the City**, described by filmmaker Ari Roussimoff as "an endless nightmare of unforgettable, shocking horror." The 105-minute black and white film tells the story of a former freak show barker named Paul Mills who returns to New York after travelling the carnival circuit for 20 years. He encounters a violent, chaotic, and decaying city, as well as tormenting visions of his father, who died a drunk, and brother and mother who committed suicide. Unable to find happiness or peace, Paul drifts towards death and awakens in a Faustian region between heaven and hell where he'll wander forever. *Shadows in the City* stars Craig Smith as Paul Mills and also features the last screen appearances of two legendary filmmakers, the late Emile de Antonio as the Mystic and the late Jack Smith as the Spirit of Death. Artist Ari Roussimoff wrote and directed the film. *Shadows in the City*: Ari Roussimoff, City Shadows Productions, 347 W. 55th St., #6H, New York, NY 10019; (212) 307-5256.

Florida videomaker Donald Delaney is starting production on **The Message in the Mirror**, a documentary about black history. Filmed on loca-

tion at Zephyrhills Correctional Institution, the 22-minute video will examine the educational issues faced by the African American community. Filming will take place on the prison grounds, featuring inmates, prison staff, and administrators, as well as "freeworld" guests including prominent black citizens from around the country. *The Message in the Mirror* video crew consists of Delaney, Arthur "New York" McComb, and Perry Mason, who plan to show the completed tape at the annual Department of Corrections of Florida Black History Month video presentation. *The Message in the Mirror*: Donald Delaney, Box 518, Zephyrhills, FL 33539.

The video and multimedia artist Miroslaw Rogala has created a new video wall display for the City of Chicago that celebrates local design talents. **Chicago Designs: Fashion, Photography, Architecture** interweaves these elements into a coherent whole. Along with the exhibit by the same name, Rogala's video wall was displayed at the Chicago Public Library Culture Center from October through December of last year. Commissioned by Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs, Rogala accompanied several of





the city's most prominent fashion photographers to capture the atmosphere and excitement of their working methods. For *Chicago Designs*, the artist digitized about 1,500 images using the new Trek DigiView program on the Amiga computer. Once digitized, the images were imported into the Electronic Arts Deluxe Paint III program to colorize, tint, and paint. With Mindware International's PageFlipper FX program, Rogala animated the images, which were then recorded directly from the Amiga computer onto three-quarter-inch SP videotape for on-line editing and processing. Quantel Paintbox graphics and Mirage digital video effects were added to enhance and upgrade the look of the Amiga graphics. *Chicago Designs: Fashion, Photography, Architecture*: Joel Botfeld or Darrell Moore, Outerpretation, 1524 S. Peoria, Chicago, IL 60608; (312) 423-2953.

The experience of community video producers in Bolivia is documented in *Making Waves: Popular Video in Bolivia*, by videographer Karen Ranucci. The 30-minute program interweaves clips of videotapes made by these producers with footage showing them at work. A group of shoeshine boys documents the lives of people in their community using video as a tool to "give a face to those who are faceless in society." An independent video production company produces

daily Quechua language news and cultural programs that are broadcast to thousands of Quechua-speaking Indians. A cooperative association of Bolivian videomakers pool their labor and equipment to make tapes that "defend their culture" against the foreign influences that penetrate their society. *Making Waves* is being distributed in conjunction with the Democracy in Communication package of tapes made by Latin American independent and community video producers. *Making Waves: Popular Video in Bolivia*: International Media Resource Exchange, 124 Washington Pl., New York, NY 10014; (212) 463-0108; fax: (212) 243-2007.

From August 1988 to December 1989, New York City spent over \$1-million destroying homes, harassing homeless people, and terrorizing the Lower East Side with police violence. In Paul Garrin's video *By Any Means Necessary* a two-year chronicle of confrontation and conflict unfolds between the city of New York and its police force, and housing activists, homeless people, and squatters battling for fair housing. Shot entirely on video 8, the 30-minute documentary witnesses police rioting in Tompkins Square, an arson fire burning out of control as the fire department stands by, the forceful demolition of squatter buildings, the ravaging of Tent City in Tompkins

Square Park by parks officers and police, and the eviction of homeless activists from an abandoned school. *By Any Means Necessary*: Video Data Bank, 37 S. Wabash, Chicago, IL 60603; (312) 899-5172.

## ATTENTION AIVF MEMBERS

The **In and Out of Production** column is a regular feature in *The Independent*, designed to give AIVF members an opportunity to keep the organization and others interested in independent media informed about current work. We profile works-in-progress as well as recent releases. These are not critical reviews, but informational descriptions. AIVF members are invited to submit detailed information about their latest film or videotape for inclusion in **In and Out of Production**. Send descriptions and black and white photographs to: *The Independent*, 625 Broadway, 9th floor., New York, NY 10012; attn: In and Out of Production.

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## FESTIVALS

**This month's festivals have been compiled by Kathryn Bowser, director of the FIVF Festival Bureau. Listings do not constitute an endorsement. Since some details change faster than we do, we recommend that you contact the festival for further information before sending prints or tapes. In order to improve our reliability and make this column more beneficial to independents, we encourage all film- and videomakers to contact FIVF Festival Bureau with their personal festival experiences, positive and negative.**

### Domestic

**AMERICAN CHILDREN'S TELEVISION FESTIVAL/OLLIE AWARDS**, Oct., IL. Estab. 1985, fest awards "overall excellence in television for children." Any program type or length, except classroom programming, produced specifically for children 2-18, broadcast or cablecast in previous 2 yrs. Format: 3/4". Entry fee: \$160. Deadline: June 30. Contact: David Kleeman, American Children's Television Festival, 1400 E. Touhy, Ste. 260, Des Plaines, IL 60019-3305; (708) 390-8700; fax: (708) 390-9435; telex: 3718033.

**AMERICAN FILM INSTITUTE VIDEO FESTIVAL**, Oct., CA. Ind. video artists are featured in variety of programs in fest's 11th yr. Curated by group of ind. video professionals & activists. Last yr 80 hrs of video & TV in cats such as New Works, Video Glasnost, European Masterworks, Open Channels, Visions, Alternative Resolutions, Freewaves. Entry fee: \$25. Deadline: June 1. Contact: Ken Wlaschin, AFI Video Festival, 2021 North Western Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90027; (213) 856-7771; fax: (213) 462-4049; telex: 3729910 FILM LSA.

**ASPEN FILMFEST**, Sept. 25-29, CO. About 35 films shown annually in invitational showcase for ind. shorts, docs & features. Program incl. Short Subject Film Competition for ind. filmmakers living & working in US; films in competition must be under 30 min., completed after Jan. 1, 1990. \$2,500 in awards. Entry fee: \$25. Format: 35mm, 16mm. Contact: Amy Egerton, Aspen Filmfest, Box 8910, Aspen, CO 81612; (303) 925-6882; fax: (303) 925-9570.

**CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, Oct. 11-25, IL. Now in 27th yr, fest one of largest US int'l competitive fests, programming films & videos produced in preceding 2 yrs. Cats: feature (midwest premieres), doc (arts/humanities, social/political, history/biography), short subject (drama, humor/satire, films for children, experimental), student (comedy, drama, experimental, nonfiction, animation), ind. video (short, educational, animation, feature, experimental, music video), ind. video doc (arts/humanities, social/political, history/

biography), mixed film/video (short, doc, educational, animation, feature, experimental), educational (performing/visual arts, natural sciences/math, social sciences, humanities, recreation/sports), animation, TV production, TV commercial. Awards: Gold Hugo (Grand Prix), Silver Hugo, Gold & Silver Plaques, Certificates of Merit, Getz World Peace Award. Each yr features over 125 films from several countries, as well as tributes, retros & special programs. Entry fees: \$25-225. Deadline: May 30. Contact: Entry coordinator, Chicago Int'l Film Festival, 415 N. Dearborn St., Chicago, IL 60610-9990; (312) 644-3400; fax: (312) 644-0784; telex: 936086.

**HAWAII INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, Dec. 1-7, HI. "When Strangers Meet" perennial theme of noncompetitive fest showcasing works from or about Asian Pacific region that promote understanding among people of Asia, Pacific & US. All screenings are free to public & crowds of over 50,000 annually attend. Fest held at 10 locations on Oahu. From Dec. 8-14 travels to neighbor islands Molokai, Maui, Kauai & Big Island. About 50-80 films shown; features, docs & shorts accepted. This yr fest looking for films reflecting harmony w/ earth & love of land. Fest, formerly associated w/ East-West Center, now ind. nonprofit corp. Format: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: July 1. Contact: Jeannette Paulson, Hawaii International Film Festival, 1777 East-West Rd., Honolulu, HI 96848; (808) 944-7666; fax: (808) 949-5578.

**MILL VALLEY FILM FESTIVAL**, Oct. 3-10, CA. Now in 14th yr, noncompetitive fest growing to be well-known showcase for new discoveries of US ind. work & venue for int'l films. Last yr 50 films from 15 countries shown, many W. Coast premieres avail. for distribution. Features, shorts & docs accepted; program also incl. 3-day Videofest. Audiences over 22,000. Fest interested in works demonstrating commitment & dealing w/ social issues. Entry fee: \$12 (\$20 int'l). Format: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4"; preview on 1/2". Deadline: July 1. Contact: Mark Fishkin/Mary Pottier, Mill Valley Film Festival, Mill Creek Plaza, 38 Miller Ave., Ste. 6, Mill Valley, CA 94941; (415) 383-5256; fax: (415) 383-8606.

**NEW YORK FILM FESTIVAL**, Sept. 20-Oct. 6, NY. As major int'l fest & uniquely NY film event, 29-yr-old prestigious, noncompetitive fest programs approx. 25 film programs from throughout world, primarily narrative features but also doc features & experimental films of all lengths. Shorts programmed w/ features. Audiences usually sell out in advance & incl. major NY film critics & distributors. Press conferences after each screening w/ directors, producers & actors. Must be NY premieres. Presented by Film Society of Lincoln Center & held at Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center. No entry fee; filmmakers responsible for round trip shipping fees for preview. Deadline: early July. Contact: Marian Masone, New York Film Festival, 140 W. 65th St., New York, NY 10023; (212) 877-1800, ext. 489; fax: (212) 724-2813. New address after May 2: 70 Lincoln Center Plaza, New York, NY 10023-6595; (212) 875-5610; fax: (212) 875-5636.

**VISIONS OF US**, August, CA. 7th annual competition for nonprofessional videomakers, sponsored by Sony & American Film Institute. Works should express vision of the world. Cats: fiction, nonfiction, experimental, music video; special Young People's Merit Award (under 17 yrs). Grand Prize awarded; all prizes are equipment awards provided by Sony. Grand Prize, 1st place & Young People Merit Award winners flown to awards ceremony. Last yr 600 entries received. Judges: Debbie Allen, Kathleen Kennedy, Levar Burton, Johnny



Depp, David Byrne, Jerry Kramer, Tom Parks, Rob Reiner. Entries must be under 30 min. Format: 1/2", Beta, 8mm video. Deadline: June 15. Contact: Visions of US, Box 200, Hollywood, CA 90078; (213) 856-7743.

## Foreign

**CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL ANNUAL FILM FESTIVAL**, Sept., Canada. Open to nonprofessional productions. Showings held in several cities in Canada during autumn. Cats: amateur filmmakers; ind. filmmakers, preprofessional students of film. Awards: Best film, certificates; in 1st cat. add'l awards incl. Best Canadian entry, scenario, doc, natural sciences, animation, experimental, editing, humor, teen 16-19, teen under 16. Max. running time: 30 min. Entry fee: \$15 Canadian. Format: 16mm, 8mm, super 8, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: June 10. Contact: Ben Andrews, Canadian International Annual Film Festival, festival director, 25 Eugenia St., Barrie, Ontario, Canada L4M 1P6; (705) 737-2729.

**KELIBIA INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF AMATEUR FILM**, July, Tunisia. Biannual fest organized by Tunisian Ministry of Cultural Affairs in collaboration w/ Tunisian Federation of Amateur Filmmakers. Program incl. competition open to selected amateur films, out of competition section, info section (video), tribute to a nat'l cinema, symposia & debates on cinema. Awards: Golden Falcon, silver medal, bronze medal, special jury award. Format: 16mm, super 8. Deadline: June 20. Contact: Mourad Ghram, International Amateur Film Festival, Box 116, 1015 Tunis, Tunisia; tel: (01) 280 298; telex: 14 032 TN.

**LAUSANNE INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF FILMS ON ARCHITECTURE AND TOWN PLANNING (FIFAL)**, Oct., Switzerland. Films w/ central theme of architecture & urban planning accepted in cats of doc, fiction, animation. Entries must be completed in last 5 yrs. 15 awards incl. gold, silver, bronze trophies & cash; Grand Prix, Award of State of Vaud, City of Lausanne, EPFL, Special Jury Award, ASFS, ASPEN, doc., fiction, animated, public award, 6 distinctions. Max. length: 60 min. No entry fee. Format: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: June 30. Contact: Georget Visdei, Festival International du Film d'Architecture et d'Urbanisme de Lausanne, Escaliers du Marche 19, 1003 Lausanne, Switzerland; tel: (021) 312 1735; fax: (021) 206 509; telex: 454 199 TxcH.

**TURIN INTERNATIONAL YOUTH FILM FESTIVAL/ CINEMA GIOVANI**, Nov. 8-16, Italy. Now in 9th yr, excellent competitive showcase for new, young ind. directors & filmmaking trends held in Torino in northern Italy's Piedmont region. US liaison Michael Solomon works w/ FIVF to preselect entries for several sections. Int'l Competition for Feature Films: 35mm & 16mm Italian premieres by young filmmakers completed after Aug. 1, 1990. Short Film Competition: films up to 30 min. Noncompetitive section: medium-length films (30-60 min.), important premieres & works by jury members. Turin Space: films, videos & super 8 films by directors born or living in Piedmont region. Retro: English Cinema of '50s & '60s. Special Events: short retros, screenings of up & coming directors' works, reviews of significant moments in ind. filmmaking. Awards: Best feature film (lire 20,000,000); best short film

(lire 3,000,000). Add'l awards may incl. special jury awards & special mentions. Local & foreign audiences approach 35,000, w/ 22 nations represented & over 165 journalists accredited to fest. About 300 films shown during event. Entry fee: \$10, payable to Cross Productions. Formats: 35mm, 16mm only, preview on 1/2" or 3/4". Deadline: July 15. Contact: Michael Solomon, FIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th fl., New York, NY 10012; (212) 473-3400 or (212) 941-8389; fax: (212) 941-1628.

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**FOR SALE:** Ikegami HL55 camera w/ Ampex CVR5 SP on-board recorder & Fujinon 8.5x14CCD zoom lens. Carefully maintained, quiet picture, low hours. \$28,000. Don't hesitate. Ikegami HL95B camera, any reasonable offer. Call (212) 627-9120.

**THINK AHEAD:** Room air conditioner for sale. Friedrich Powermiser. 6500 BTU/hr. Energy rating 9.4. In great condition. \$375. Call Martha: (212) 473-3400.

## Freelancers

**THE NORMAN CORWIN DOCUMENTARY Program** is developing an hour-long documentary exploring a residential program for homeless people with AIDS. We are seeking funds, in-kind donations, collaborators. Call Michel Milman (213) 654-8682.

**AWARD WINNING CAMERAMAN** w/ 16mm ACL II looking for challenging projects. Partial client list: ABC Sports, IBM, LIRR, Pitney Bowes, Wilderness Society. Complete crews avail., incl. sound & grip pkgs. Reasonable rates. Call Mike (718) 352-1287.

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**CINEMATOGRAPHER** looking for interesting projects. Owner of an Arri 16SR & other camera & lighting equipment. Reasonable rates. Call Ralph (718) 284-0223.

**DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** avail. for dramatic 16 or 35mm productions of any length. Credits include *Metropolitan*. Call to see my reel. John Thomas (201) 783-7360.

**VIDEO PRODUCTION PKGS** incl. camera, multi-format recording, tripod, lighting & audio accessories. Experienced camera person at reasonable rates. Also video transfers from 16mm, 8mm, photos & slides (w/ dissolve). (212) 260-7748.

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**DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** w/ Aaton XTR pkg incl. Zeiss, nikkor & video tap; avail. in the Pacific Northwest. Camera can rent separately. Call Lars: (206) 632-5496.

**Each entry in the Classifieds column has a 250 character limit & costs \$20 per issue. Ads exceeding this length will be edited. Payment must be made at the time of submission. Anyone wishing to run a classified more than once must pay for each insertion & indicate the number of insertions on the submitted copy. Each classified must be typed, double-spaced & worded exactly as it should appear. Deadlines are the 8th of each month, two months prior to the cover date, e.g. May 8 for the July issue. Make check or money order—no cash, please—payable to FIVE, 625 Broadway, 9th floor, New York, NY 10012.**

**BETACAM PACKAGE** (regular or SP) w/ tripod, lights, mics, shotgun & van. Award-winning cameraman & crew avail. Fast & reliable. Broadcast quality. Call Eric (718) 389-7104.

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**REEL MUSIC PRODUCTIONS:** Electronic and acoustic scoring for features, documentaries or any project. Innovative, experienced, flexible film/video composer in all styles of music. Arnie Bieber (212) 385-2879.

**DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** w/ European/Australian background & over 10 yrs exp. avail. for film/video projects. (Especially interested in 35mm features.) Rates/terms negotiable. Have reel, film & camera pkgs upon request. Miklos Philips (212) 713-5508, 24 hr service.

**BETACAM SP PKGS** avail.: New BVW-507 (w/ 700-line resolution); BVW-505 also avail. Your choice of field production package comes w/ award-winning videographer, Toyota 4-Runner & competitive rates. Call Hal at (201) 662-7526.

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**COMPOSER** w/ independent film & video credits for your production. Synthesizers w/ SMPTE lock for big "movie music" sound and/or acoustic instruments for intimate scenes. Audio/video demo. Whistling Lion Productions, Jim (718) 273-7250.

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**ENTERTAINMENT LAWYER** avail. to film community to draft/negotiate/review contracts, handle legal matters, assist in financing. Reasonable fees (718) 454-7044.

**STEADICAM** for film & video. Special rates for independents. Call Sergei Franklin (212) 228-4254.

**HESSION-ZIEMAN PRODUCTIONS** Betacam & Betacam SP field production crew for documentaries, commercials, music videos, public relations, dance, etc. Sony BVW 507 camcorder with full lighting, sound & grip pkg. Experienced DP. Call (212) 529-1254.

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**SUPER OFF-LINE RATE:** 2 Sony 3/4" w/ RM 450 edit controller, mixer, mic, \$15/hr, \$100/day, \$400/wk. Midtown location, quiet, comfortable, private room. (212) 997-1464.

**RENTAL OF 16MM & 35MM** motion picture projection systems for screenings at your location; delivered, set up & operated. We do composite, interlock & process projection to SMPTE specs. Navestar Screenings, 217 W. 21 St., NY, NY 10011.

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**BETACAM SP rental:** Sony BVW-530, Sachler Video 20, Lowell Omni-kit, Sony mics, \$450/day. Same but 3/4" SP or Betacam, \$350/day. Ike 730A & BVU110 w/ tc \$175/day. Betacam or 3/4" SP to 3/4" SP cuts only w/ Amiga 2000 \$50/hr. Electronic Visions (212) 691-0375.

**OFF-LINE AT HOME!** We will rent you 2 Sony 5850s with RM440 or RM450 edit controller and monitors. Low rates by the month, \$650/wk. Answer your own phone and cut all night if you like! Call John at (212) 245-1364 or 529-1254.

**COBBLE HILL OFF-LINE:** Sony 5850 system \$150/day, \$500/wk in comfortable apartment near downtown Brooklyn. Copier, fax avail. Call Fred at (718) 852-2643.

**3/4" VIDEO EDITING** w/ "toaster." On-line w/ editor available. L.I., reasonable rates, flexible hrs. You've heard about it, now experience it! High-end video effects on a low budget. Call Mona at Absolute Video (516) 482-5322.

**S-VHS, 1/2" VHS** industrial editing decks for rough cuts & dubs. Also, Alta Cygnus TBC w/ special effects & Amiga computer w/ graphics capability, \$15/hr. Private, quiet facility in Greenwich Village. Call Bob (212) 473-7462.

**PROFESSIONAL 16/35MM NEGATIVE** cutting & editing. 40 yrs experience. \$3.50/cut. Student discounts. Super discount for 6 or more class films. Courier service avail. Northeast Negative Matchers. (413) 736-2177 or (617) 969-7247.

**3/4" OFF LINE EDITING DOWNTOWN** for rent. Comfortable, private editing suite w/ new Sony RM450 in convenient location. \$15/hr, \$100/day, \$400/wk, \$500/wk w/ 24 hr access. New York Center for Visual History, (212) 777-6900, x 314.

## AIVF REGIONAL CORRESPONDENTS

AIVF has a network of regional correspondents who can provide membership information, hold meetings, and aid recruitment in areas of the country outside New York City. AIVF members are urged to contact them about AIVF-related needs and problems, your activities, and other relevant information and news:

**Howard Aaron**, Northwest Film and Video Ctr., 1219 S.W. Park Ave., Portland, OR 97205; (503) 221-1156

**Cheryl Chisolm**, 2844 Engle Road, NW, Atlanta, GA 30318; (404) 792-2167

**Dee Davis**, Appalshop, 306 Whitesburg, KY 41858; (606) 633-0108

**Loni Ding**, 2335 Jones St., San Francisco, CA 94133; (415) 474-5132; 673-6428

**Dai Sil Kim-Gibson**, 1752 17th St., NW, Washington, DC 20009; (202) 232-6912

**Deanna Morse**, School of Communication, Grand Valley State Univ., Allendale, MI 49401; (616) 895-3101

**Lourdes Portillo**, 981 Esmeralda St., San Francisco, CA 94110; (415) 824-5850

**Bart Weiss**, 1611 Rio Vista Dr., Dallas, TX 75208; (214) 948-7300

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**Betacam SP Field Production** .....\$700/Day

Sony BVW-200 Camcorder w/Nikon S15x8.5 Lens, Sachler Video 20 Tripod, Shure FP-31 Mixer, (3) Lowell DP Lights w/Umbrellas, Samson Wireless Mics, JVC TM-22 Monitor, Ford 4x4 Truck w/Phone.

**3/4" Off-Line Editing** .....\$30/hr.

Sony 5800 Player, Sony 5850 Recorder, Sony RM-440 Editor, Fairlight CVI Effects, Cassette, Tascam Mixer.

**3/4" Field Production** .....\$450/Day

Sony DXC-3000 Camera w/Fujinon 12x Lens, Sony VO-6800 Deck, Bogen Tripod, JVC TM-22 Monitor, (3) Lowell DP Lights w/Umbrellas, Assorted Mics.

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## Conferences ■ Seminars

**AUTO-CENSORSHIP:** The Chilling Effect After the Fact symposium: Sat., May 4 at the New School for Social Research. Cosponsored by Media Alliance, AIVF & New School. Artists, writers, curators, publishers, journalists, filmmakers encouraged to show & tell how they've been affected by or succumbed to censorship attempts. Contact: New School for Social Research, Media Studies Dept., 2 W. 13th St., New York, NY 10011; (212) 627-9629.

**BOSTON FILM/VIDEO FOUNDATION** workshops: Basic Video Prod., beg. May 7; Prod. Mgmt., May 18; Intro to Digital Video Editing, May 4 & 5; Interviewing Skills for Documentary Prod.; 2D Computer Animation, May 5; 3D Computer Animation, May 4; Computer Image Processing, May 18. Contact: BF/VF, 1126 Boylston St., Boston, MA 02215; (617) 536-1540.

**CENTER FOR NEW TV** workshops: Basic Video Prod., beg. May 1; Intro. to Videotape Editing, beg. May 14; Intermediate Editing, beg. May 6; Grantwriting, May 11. Contact: CNTV, 912 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago, IL 60605; (312) 427-5446.

**FILM/VIDEO ARTS** spring workshops: Intro. to 3/4" Video Editing, May 4 & 5; Advanced 3/4" Editing, May 18 & 19; Arri SR Workshop, May 4 & 5. Contact: F/VA, 817 Broadway, New York, NY 10003; (212) 673-9361.

**SOUND & IMAGES IN FILMS ON ART** conference, May 30 & 31, Univ. of S. California. Examines relationship of auditory & visual info. Participants incl. directors, composers, art historians, scholars, sound designers & engineers. Workshops on Music Composition, Using the Synthesizer to Simulate Scores, Sound Design, New Sound Technologies, Sound Mixing. Registration fees if postmarked by May 10: \$50, \$20 students; on-site \$65, \$30 students. Contact: Brenda Cathell, USC School of Cinema-Television, Los Angeles, CA 90089-2211; (213) 740-2804; fax: (213) 740-7682.

**WOMEN MAKE MOVIES** media workshops: Music Makes the Movie, May 11. Contact: Women Make Movies, 225 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10012; (212) 925-0606.

**YELLOWSTONE MEDIA ARTS** summer workshops: series of 1-week workshops, lectures, discussions, exercises & screenings, June 17-July 25. Incl. Cinema & Social Change in Latin America, Grant Writing, Advanced Cinematography, Capturing the Images of Sounds of Culture, From Manager to Mogul: The Business of Making Films, Scriptwriting, Documentary & Endangered Cultures. Reasonable course fees & accommodation costs. Contact: Paul Monaco, Dept. of Media & Theatre Arts, Montana State Univ., Bozeman, MT 59717; (406) 994-6224.

## Films ■ Tapes Wanted

**CHIP TAYLOR COMMUNICATIONS**, distributor of more than 325 exclusive titles, continually screens new documentaries on NTSC VHS or 3/4" for distribution consideration. Send to: CTC, 15 Spollett Dr., Derry, NH 03030; (603) 434-9262.

**DIRECT IMPACT** produces 30-60 sec. experimental public service announcements. Send treatment or storyboard to (new address): C-Hundred Film Corp., Box 423, Athens, GA 30603; (404) 353-1494.

**FESTIVAL ON TIBET** looking for films and videos on

**Notices are listed free of charge. AIVF members receive first priority; others are included as space permits. The Independent reserves the right to edit for length. Deadlines for Notices will be respected. These are the 8th of the month, two months prior to cover date, e.g., May 8 for the July issue. Send to: Independent Notices, FIVE, 625 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.**

Tibet &/or Buddhism. Fest will be held in New York City in October 1991. Deadline: June 1. Contact: Somi Roy or Zette Emmons, (212) 227-6895.

**NEW DAY FILMS**, self-distribution coop for independent producers, seeks new members w/ recent social issue docs for US nontheatrical markets. Contact: Ralph Arlyck, 79 Raymond Ave., Poughkeepsie, NY 12601.

**TAPESTRY INTERNATIONAL**, distributor of independently produced docs, drama, music & performance, seeks new product to sell to foreign & domestic TV markets. Contact: Lisa Honig, Tapestry Int'l, 924 Broadway, New York, NY 10010; (212) 677-6007; fax: (212) 473-8164.

**WOMEN MAKE MOVIES**, nation's largest distributor of films & videos by & about women, seeks acquisitions for 1991 catalogue. Especially interested in health, sexuality, black studies, Asian studies, Latinas, int'l perspectives, lesbian work, social issue doc & experimental work. Deadline: April 15. Send VHS cassette & written materials incl. synopsis to: Acquisitions, Women Make Movies, 225 Lafayette, Ste. 207; New York, NY 10012.

## Opportunities ■ Gigs

**RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS:** Indo-US Subcommittee on Educ. & Culture offers long & short-term awards in all academic disciplines for 1992-93 research in India. Scholars & professionals w/limited or no prior experience in India especially encouraged to apply. Deadline: June 15. Fulbright Scholar Program for 1992-93 offers grants for research, combined research & lecturing, or university lecturing. Deadline for Australia, South Asia, most of Latin America & USSR: June 15. Deadline for Africa, Asia, Europe, Middle East, Canada & lecturing awards in Caribbean, Mexico & Venezuela: Aug. 1. Contact: Council for Int'l Exchange of Scholars, 3007 Tilden St., NW, Ste. 5M, Box NEWS, Washington, DC 20008-3009; (202) 686-7877.

**INDEPENDENT FILM GROUP** seeking screenplays from talented writers in all genres (no horror, please) for low-budget feature films (\$200-250 range). Send 1 copy of script w/ contact info to: Philips/West, 304 Clermont Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11205-4606.

**INSTRUCTORS/VIDEOGRAPHERS:** Summer positions w/ Legacy Int'l to train youths, ages 14-18. Duties incl. instruction in video prod. & media, some program documentation. Located 4 hrs SW of Washington, DC. June 17-Aug. 22. Contact: Marlene, Legacy Int'l, Rte. 4, Bedford, VA 24523; (703) 297-5982.

## Publications

**FREE CATALOG** from Chip Taylor Communications offers 326 film & video titles indexed in 41 subject areas, ranging from Arts to Zoology & highlights 74 new releases. Contact: Chip Taylor Communications, 15 Spollett Dr., Derry, NH 03038; (603) 434-9262.

**LIBRARY OF AFRICAN CINEMA:** Guide to video resources for colleges & public libraries now avail. from California Newsreel. Contact: Resolution Inc., California Newsreel, 149 Ninth St. #420, San Francisco, CA 94103.

**NEW FUNDRAISING AUDIT GUIDE** now avail. from Foundation Center: *Raise More Money for Your Nonprofit Organization: A Guide to Evaluating and Improving Your Fundraising*. \$14.95 plus \$3 shipping & handling. Also, *Directory of New and Emerging Foundations and New York State Foundations: A Comprehensive Directory* now avail. Contact: Foundation Center, 79 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10003; (212) 620-4230.

**NFB FILM GUIDE:** *Productions of the National Film Board of Canada from 1939 to 1989*, incl. 8,000 film-listing. Special prepublication price until May 15: \$180 US for orders outside Canada. The price thereafter: \$240. Contact: Nat'l Film Board of Canada, Customer Services, D-10, Box 6100, Sta. A, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3C 3H5; fax: (514) 283-7564.

## Resources ■ Funds

**APPARATUS PRODUCTIONS**, w/ NYSCA support, offers production & completion grants up to \$5,000 to emerging filmmakers who have not received NYSCA funding. Super 8, 16mm or 35mm low-budget noncommercial films that explore alternative approaches to narrative preferred. Also \$5,000 Bill Sherwood Memorial Award to filmmaker sharing Sherwood's commitment to humor, drama & engagement of sexual politics in her/his work. Deadline: May 15. Send SASE for appl. to: Apparatus Productions, 225 Lafayette Street, Rm. 207, New York, NY 10012.

**CPB TELEVISION PROGRAM FUND** announces multicultural programming solicitation for development & production of 58 min. programs for nat'l public TV broadcast. Proposals may be submitted in 3 areas: children's & educational, news & public affairs, w/ drama. Producer & director must be minorities. Deadline: August 15. For guidelines, contact: Multicultural Programming Solicitation, TV Program Fund, CPB, 901 E Street, NW, Washington DC 20004-2006; (202) 879-9600.

**DCTV COMMUNITY PROJECTS** provides members w/ free or low-cost equipment for projects that positively impact communities by raising awareness of unexplored issues, opening new areas of artistic expression, increasing artists' visibility, or involving people in videomaking process. Deadline ongoing. Contact: Community Projects, DCTV, 87 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10013; (212) 966-4510.

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# The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers

When you join the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, you're doing something for yourself—and for others. Membership entitles you to a wide range of benefits. Plus, it connects you with a national network of independent producers. Adding your voice helps us all. The stronger AIVF is, the more we can act as advocate for the interests of independents like yourself—inside the corridors of Washington, with the press, and with others who affect our livelihoods.

## 8 Benefits of Membership

### THE INDEPENDENT

Membership provides you with a year's subscription to *The Independent*. Published 10 times a year, the magazine is a vital source of information about the independent media field. Each issue helps you get down to business with festival listings, funding deadlines, exhibition venues, and more. Plus, you'll find thought-provoking features, coverage of the field's news, and regular columns on business, technical, and legal matters.

### THE FESTIVAL BUREAU

AIVF maintains up-to-date information on over 650 national and international festivals, and can help you determine which are right for your film or video.

### Liaison Service

AIVF works directly with many foreign festivals, in some cases collecting and shipping tapes or prints overseas, in other cases serving as the U.S. host to visiting festival directors who come to preview work.

### Tape Library

Members can house copies of their work in the AIVF tape library for screening by visiting festival programmers. Or make your own special screening arrangements with AIVF.

### INFORMATION SERVICES

#### Distribution

In person or over the phone, AIVF can provide information about distributors and the kinds of films, tapes, and markets in which they specialize.

### AIVF's Member Library

Our library houses information on distributors, funders, and exhibitors, as well as sample contracts, funding applications, budgets, and other matters.

### SEMINARS

Our seminars explore current business, aesthetic, legal, and technical topics, giving independent producers a valuable forum to discuss relevant issues.

### BOOKS AND TAPES

AIVF has the largest mail order catalog of media books and audiotaped seminars in the U.S. Our list covers all aspects of film and video production. And we're constantly updating our titles, so independents everywhere have access to the latest media information. We also publish a growing list of our own titles, covering festivals, distribution, and foreign and domestic production resource guides.

*continued*

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## ADVOCACY

Whether it's freedom of expression, public funding levels, public TV, contractual agreements, cable legislation, or other issues that affect independent producers, AIVF is there working for you.

## INSURANCE

### Production Insurance

A production insurance plan, tailor-made for AIVF members and covering public liability, faulty film and tape, equipment, sets, scenery, props, and extra expense, is available, as well as an errors and omissions policy with unbeatable rates.

### Group Health, Disability, and Life Insurance Plans with TEIGIT

AIVF currently offers two health insurance policies, so you're able to find the one that best suits your needs.

### Dental Plan

Reduced rates for dental coverage are available to NYC and Boston-area members.

## DEALS AND DISCOUNTS

### Service Discounts

In all stages of production and in most formats, AIVF members can take advantage of discounts on equipment rentals, processing, editing services, and other production necessities.

### National Car Rental

National offers a 10-20 percent discount to AIVF members. Write for the AIVF authorization number.

### Mastercard Plan

Credit cards through the Maryland Bank are available to members with a minimum annual income of \$18,000. Fees are waived the first year.

### Facets Multimedia Video Rentals

AIVF members receive discounts on membership and mail-order video rentals and sales from this Chicago-based video rental organization.

## MORE TO COME

Keep watching *The Independent* for information about additional benefits.

## Join AIVF Today ..

Five thousand members strong, the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers has been working for independent producers — providing information, fighting for artists' rights, securing funding, negotiating discounts, and offering group insurance plans. Join our growing roster.

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### Organizational membership

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Discounts on the AIVF mailing list

### Student membership

10 issues of *The Independent*  
Free *MPE Guide*  
Listing in the student section of the *AIVF Membership Directory*

### Library/Institutional membership

All the benefits of individual membership  
PLUS: Special notice of upcoming publications  
Back issues of *The Independent*

## Help Yourself

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**EXPERIMENTAL TV CENTER** Residency Program offers artists opportunity to study techniques of video image processing during 5-day intensive residency. Deadline: July 15. Also provides Presentation Funds of small grants to nonprofits to assist w/ presentation of works of audio, video & related electronic art. Deadline ongoing. Contact: ETC, 180 Front St., Owego, NY 13827; (607) 687-1423.

**FILM IN THE CITIES** offers production grants up to \$16,000, Encouragement grants up to \$3,000 & work-in-progress grants up to \$7,000 to emerging & mid-career film & video artists in IA, MN, ND, SD & WI. Free grants info. workshops. Deadline: May 9, 1991. For info. & appl. contact: Margaret Weinstein, Film in the Cities, 2388 University Ave., St Paul, MN 55114; (612) 646-6104.

**INDEPENDENT PRODUCTION FUND:** Regional fellowship program awards grants up to \$5,000 to media artists in TX, OK, AK, MS, KS, NB, PR & US VI. Deadline: May 1. Contact: Southwest Alternate Media Project, 1519 W. Main, Houston, TX 77006.

**LYN BLUMENTHAL MEMORIAL FUND** for Independent Video will fund video production & criticism that addresses theme of the Unlegislated Body. Fund encourages video projects that make inventive & strategic use of small format technologies. Grants range from \$1,000-\$3,000. Deadline: May 15. For appl., write: Lyn Blumenthal Memorial Fund, Box 3514, Church St. Station, New York, NY 10007.

**NICHOLL FELLOWSHIP IN SCREENWRITING:** Up to 5 fellowships of \$20,000 awarded to persons who have not earned money writing or sold or optioned screenplay or teleplay. Contact: Academy Foundation, Nicholl Fellowship in Screenwriting, 8949 Wilshire Blvd., Box 5511, Beverly Hills, CA 90209.

**PIVFA SUBSIDY PROGRAM** to facilitate completion of ind., noncommercial projects by members of PA Independent Film/Video Assoc. Grants range \$500 to \$1,000. Deadline: June 12. For complete guidelines & form, call (215) 895-6594.

**PROPOSED VIDEO GRANT:** San Francisco Artspace offers artists access to video hi-8 equipment & audio facilities. Artists may request ass't for full project or only postprod. needs. Nonresidents of greater Bay Area eligible for travel & per diem honoraria of up to \$2,000. Grants awarded to artists & ind. producers living anywhere for noncommercial videos in experimental, narrative, editorial/nonfiction & doc. Deadlines: May 1 & Sept. 15. Contact: San Francisco Artspace, 1286 Folsom St., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 626-9100; fax: (415) 431-6612.

**STOCKHOLM ELECTRONIC ARTS AWARD** of \$1,800 for video w/ electroacoustic music. Fee: \$25. Deadline: June 10. Contact for appl.: Stockholm Electronic Arts Award, Svenska Rikskonserter, Box 1225, S-111 82 Stockholm, Sweden.

**WYATT SCHOLARSHIP FUND:** Film/Video Arts offers full 1-yr scholarships through Eugene Wyatt Scholarship Fund to minority students. Film & video courses incl. prod., mgmt., writing, etc. Deadline: May 15. Contact: F/VA, 817 Broadway, New York, NY 10003; (212) 673-9361.

## Publications on Distribution Now Available from AIVF Publications

### The Next Step: Distributing Independent Films and Videos

Edited by Morrie Warshawski  
A co-publication of the Media Project  
and the Foundation for Independent  
Video and Film

\$19.50

Leading professionals provide answers to frequently asked questions on distribution of independent films: markets, contracts, financial arrangements, self-distribution, promotion, and much more.

### The AIVF Guide to Film and Video Distributors

By Kathryn Bowser  
a co-publication of the Foundation for Independent  
Video and Film and the Association of Independent  
Video and Filmmakers

\$19.50

Handy profiles of over 230 nonprofit and commercial distributors, fully indexed, with practical information on type of work handled, primary markets, relations with producers, marketing and promotion, foreign distribution, contacts and more.

### Alternative Visions: Distributing Independent Media In a Home Video World

By Debra Franco  
a co-publication of the American Film Institute  
and the Foundation for Independent Video  
and Film

\$ 9.50 (AIVF and AFI members)

\$12.95 (all others)

A report to the field on the current state of distribution for alternative films and tapes. What has happened to institutional market, and what promise does the home video market actually hold for non-mainstream work? Includes detailed case studies of the marketing of 8 independent works.

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## FIVF DISTRIBUTION BOOKS

KATHRYN BOWSER  
**FESTIVAL BUREAU DIRECTOR**

In 1990, National Video Resources, a project of the Rockefeller Foundation, awarded FIVF a grant to develop an information and referral service similar to our festival bureau which would focus on the distribution of independent films and videos. An important component of the grant was support for FIVF's newest publication, *The AIVF Guide to Film and Video Distributors*. The new book, released at the end of February, was also supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

This guide, whose first edition was published in 1984, was written to provide independent medi makers with an overview of current information on distribution options. Based on the results of a survey sent to over 500 commercial and noncommercial distribution companies in the United States, the indexed directory profiles over

230 companies. Each company is described in a capsule portrait with pertinent statistical information and other details. The book is also indexed by category and genre and contains resource listings.

Since the profiles do not analyze the companies' services and reputations, we compiled, with the advice of a few independent producers and distributors, a list of questions to guide independent medi makers in discussions with potential distributors and included these questions in the guide.

The guide should prove to be an important and valuable resource not only for producers, but also for programmers, exhibitors, arts organizations, and educational and cultural institutions. It will complement FIVF's new individualized distribution information service. To use this service, producers are invited to call or write FIVF staff with questions about their distribution options. We are expanding our database on film and video distributors, as well as collecting information (catalogues, press clippings, reports, etc.) on various companies and can either provide infor-

mation over the phone or printouts based on our database. Distributors are also welcome to send us news releases and information.

Additionally, in March FIVF, in association with the American Film Institute, released *Alternative Visions: Distributing Independent Media in a Home Video World*. This study examines the current state of distribution for alternative films and tapes, including the relationship between the institutional market of libraries, schools, and universities, and the consumer market. It also includes detailed case studies of the marketing of eight independent productions as well as resource lists of publications and organizations.

These two books supplement other FIVF publications which are useful for producers seeking distribution: *The Next Step: Distributing Independent Films and Videos*, and *The AIVF Guide to Film and Video Festivals* (now available as a photocopy, with an updated edition planned for early summer 1991).

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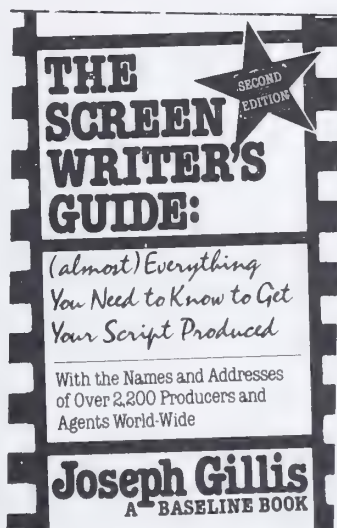
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## MEMORANDA

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 44

He was ironic without being cynical, incisive without being derisive. His dedication to video came less as a twist on the false definitions of "artistry" and more from his commitment to historical identity because he was an artist. He had a private craving for Maya Deren and Luis Buñuel. And he loved DIVA's tape *Pride '69-'89*. In his section of *Pride*, Dorothy gets pitted against the Wicked Witch while the head of a mainstream gay and lesbian rights group is shown in cahoots with Ed Koch. Ray's parallel cutting of "Poppies, poppies, now they'll sleep," with evidence of the crumbs tossed to queers in New York City transcends the specificity of location so that a viewer anywhere can get the picture.

He videotaped whenever possible, documented a teach-in on clean needle use and AIDS activism immediately after he arrived in New York from Los Angeles, captured teenagers on camera doing improvisational theater work about AIDS in their

own lives, taught a group in an after-school program both how to use the rig themselves and how to have safer sex, and explored the racist bureaucracy behind the intended failure of the city's first government endorsed needle-exchange program

In the dream we never actually wrote anything I can recall, we just sat together feeling like writing together, debating, and busting up. But then he was still alive, although I never told him the dream. I wonder what he would say now.

*Catherine Saalfeld is a media activist and writer living in New York City.*

## MEMBERABILIA

Congratulations to Richard Hankin and Tim Philo for *This Is a Stand-Up*, second place winner of the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences' **College Television Awards**. *Inside Gorbachev's USSR*, produced by David Royle, won the top **Du Pont-Columbia Journalism Award**, the Gold Baton, and Renee Tajima and Chris Choy picked up the

## UPCOMING FIVE SEMINARS

**May 4**

**AUTO-CENSORSHIP: THE CHILLING EFFECT AFTER THE FACT**

1-4 p.m.  
Parsons School May Theatre  
5th Ave. at 13th St., NYC  
Artists, curators, publishers, journalists & filmmakers will show and tell how they've been affected by recent censorship attempts. Cosponsored by FIVF, the New School, Media Alliance & the National Coalition Against Censorship. Scheduled speakers include Donna Demac (*Liberty Denied*), Richard Curry (*Freedom at Risk*), PEN representative Edith Tiger (discussing the Mailer-Ginsberg banning). Moderated by Norëen Ash-Mackay. For more information or to participate, call Ash-Mackay: (212) 627-9629.

**May 21**

**LITTLE PICTURES: A GROWING MARKET FOR CHILDREN'S MEDIA?**

7-9 p.m.  
Downtown Community Television  
87 Lafayette, NYC  
Cost to be announced

Is there more room for independent producers in the growing youth media market? Panel discussion will include distributors and programmers for the children's and young adult market. Call AIVF: (212) 473-3400 for more information.

**June 8**

**FREELANCING AS A BUSINESS**

9 a.m. - 1 p.m.  
TRS Professional Suites  
7 E. 30th St., Room F, NYC  
Cost: AIVF members \$70, \$90 nonmembers  
Arlise McDowell and Teri Meissner will provide instruction on finding freelance work in television, film, and video. Practical advice for those interested in obtaining work and developing professional contacts. Call (212) 473-3400 to charge by phone  
A second session from 1:30 - 5 p.m. will be added, if necessary.

**AIVF members receive special mailings of most events. Watch your mailbox. If you're not an AIVF member, call (212) 473-3400 for more information.**



Silver Baton for *Who Killed Vincent Chin?* Robby Henson's *Trouble Behind* has earned First Place at the **Louisville Film Festival**. The **Lincoln Prize** has been awarded to Ken Burns, producer of *The Civil War*. Congrats to AIVF member winners of the **Paul Robeson Grants** for Film and Video: Julie Gustafson, *Abortion: Across the Barricades*; Martha Wallner, *Anchors Away!*; Mimi Pickering, *Chemical Valley* distribution; Lourdes Portillo, *Fighting for Our Lives*; Marlon Riggs, *For My Own Protection*; Pam Walton, *Gay Youth*; Bob Hercules, *Getting the News in Nicaragua*; Adam Horowitz, *Home on the Range*; Louis Massiah, *Home: W.E.B. Dubois and the Nationalist Idea*; Barbara Trent, *Invasion in Panama*; M. Crenshaw and Carrie Oviatt, *The Real Fish Story*; Michael Lumpkin, *The Celluloid Closet*; Marlon Riggs and Reggie Williams, *Tongues Untied* distribution project; Gregg Araki, *Totally Screwed*; and Amber Hollibaugh and G. Reticker, *Women and Children Last*.

## EL SALVADOR CINEMATHEQUE SEEKS FILMS AND SUPPORT

The University of El Salvador is in the process of creating a cinematheque and library of film and video. UES's secretary of international relations Armando Herrera recently contacted AIVF, asking US mediamakers for help in acquiring the necessary resources. They are seeking four categories of materials and aid:

- Videos and video copies of all kinds of movies, from classic to current, feature to documentary. Materials in Spanish are best, but those in English are still useful.
- Theoretical, practical, and critical written materials, including books, manuals, magazines, and articles.
- Equipment: VHS and video 8 cameras, decks, editing, sound, and playback equipment, etc.
- Teachers, with Spanish-language skills.

All materials should be sent to Steve Cagan, 1751 Radnor Road, Cleveland Heights, OH 44118; (216) 932-2753.

## VOTE! VOTE! VOTE!

Ballots for the AIVF/FIVF Board of Directors will be mailed to all members (excluding students) late in May. Please vote and return your ballots promptly. Help make sure the board reflects the diversity of our members.

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## SUMMARY OF THE MINUTES OF THE AIVF/FIVF BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

The board of directors of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers and the Foundation for Independent Video and Film held its quarterly meeting on January 12, 1991, at the organizations' office in Manhattan. Board members present were Eugene Aleinikoff, Adrianne Furniss, secretary Dee Davis, Loni Ding, chair Dai Sil Kim-Gibson, Lourdes Portillo, president Robert Richter, executive director Lawrence Sapadin, Jack Walsh, Bart Weiss, and treasurer Debra Zimmerman.

Sapadin reported that FIVF has received a \$60,000 John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation grant, which will provide \$15,000 for completion of office renovations, \$15,000 for membership development, and \$30,000 for hiring a development director.

Managing editor of *The Independent* Patricia Thomson informed the board of the magazine's \$33,000 grant from the New York State Council on the Arts, a slight increase over the previous award.

Festival Bureau director Kathryn Bowser discussed work with the Creteil Women's Film Festival and her coordination of the New York visits by representatives of both the Oberhausen and Sydney Film Festivals. She also outlined plans underway for the next edition of the *AIVF Guide to Film and Video Festivals*, and stated that the previous edition had almost sold out.

Membership/seminars director Mary Jane Skalski reported that the membership count has increased to 4,889. She noted that the new production insurance plan offered through the association may account for the increase.

Business manager/audio director Morton Marks reported that the financial status of AIVF has improved due to increases in membership.

Larry Hall, representing the National Coalition of Public Broadcasting Producers, made a presentation to the board regarding the negotiations between the Independent Television Service and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Hall remarked that no contract had been agreed upon due to conflicting positions on CPB's role in approving the ITVS by-laws and rules governing board succession. Hall said AIVF has been a leader in the National Coalition and must continue in the future, especially during this transitional period. A committee to review the contract differences was constituted: Richter, Kim-Gibson, Aleinikoff, Davis, Sapadin, and Ding, who will make recommendations to the full board concerning AIVF's position in this matter.

Regarding fundraising, Walsh recommended that, in the future, each board member make an annual commitment to raise a specified amount of money for the organization.

In the wake of Sapadin's announcement that he is resigning as executive director, a transition

committee was established, composed of Richter, Zimmerman, and FIVF board member Steve Savage. The board appointed Bowser as acting director, Martha Gever as interim advocacy director. A search committee was also set up: Kim-Gibson, Portillo, Weiss, and Richter, with Patricia Thomson representing the staff.

## FIVF LIBRARY LAUNCHED

In December, AIVF renovated its offices to provide a comfortable work space for members using our library and information files. A partial grant from the New York State Council on the Arts enabled us to start renovation and help from members allowed us to finish. The AIVF staff would like to thank all our members for your patience. We realize how difficult it was to reach us in December during renovations. We'd especially like to thank the following members who contributed to the Members' Library:

Library Sponsors: Archive Film Production

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Library Friends: Frederic Fischer, David Royle, Mary Scott, and Peggy Stern

Library Contributors: Martin Andrews, Deirdre Boyle, Matthew Boccaccio, David Carnochan, Skip Cronkite, Laurel Davis, Maria De Luca, Yvonne Dignaro, Venay Felton, Deirdre Fishel, Robert Freedman, Mark Gasper, Brenda Goodman, Daniel Klein, Bartholomew J. Lawson, Jack Levine, Deborah Matlovsky, J.W. Gregg Meister, Kathy Powell, Peter W. Rea, R.F. Reichman, James Schamus, and Ralph M. Toporoff.

Library Buddies: Lynn Diedrich, Anthony Ferrandino, Judith A. Helfand, Jack Herman, Julia Keydel, Charles Steiner, and David Van Taylor.

## THANKS, WE NEEDED THAT

When Governor Cuomo's proposed cuts in the New York State Council on the Arts' budget were announced, AIVF sent out a mass mailing to alert our members to the news and to activate a grassroots lobbying effort to restore the budget. At the same time, we asked you to help cover the cost of this unforeseen and unbudgeted mailing. We'd like to thank those members who sent con-

tributions: Benita Abrams-Hack, Vivien Bittencourt, David Blair, Tony Brown, Juan Downey, Film News Now Foundation, Deirdre Fishel, Susan Goldbetter, Marina Gonzalez, Kari Margolis, Bianca Miller, Pat Singletary, Alonzo Speight, Marc Weiss, and Joe Windish.

Thanks also go to the AIVF members and others who have donated time to work on this issue: Sharon Greytak, Alice Martin, Irene Sosa, Robert Spencer, Mary Ann Toman, and Joan Van Haasteren.

## RAY NAVARRO: 1964-1990

*Editor's note: When we gathered the material for the collective tribute to Ray Navarro, a friend and colleague who died of an AIDS-related illness in November 1990, which we published in the March issue of The Independent, Ray's close friend and frequent collaborator Catherine Saalfeld was out of the country. We would now like to add her contribution to the others.*

### CATHERINE SAALFIELD

I had a dream about two months before he died that Ray and I were writing his obituary together. The dream was nonchalant: we were eating poppy seed bagels with too much cream cheese, and he was reclining next to me in front of the computer. We had done this so many times in our waking hours that the apparition felt utterly credible and the dream had all the trappings of Ray's emotional presence—he was brilliantly serious, seductively personal, and fiercely ironic.

He could be intimidating in his resolve; he wanted to cover all the bases and finish what he had started. And he never let a miscalculation get by. He thrived on theoretical speculation and disagreed with his sparring mates in the Whitney Independent Study Program as much as possible. We would sit together in seminars—him eating baba ganoush and Indonesian rice salad and me chain smoking—and we would bicker with the visiting artists about their narratives, their chosen media, or their clothes. Ultimately, he was always standing by Deleuze and Guattari.

He took everything personally and made that part of his work. He loved ACT UP at the same time that he challenged each decision our "democratic" process brought us to. He got sick before the Latino/a AIDS Activist committee was formed, but it was his dream to build coalitions on his very identity. As a founding member of the AIDS activist video collective DIVA TV, he relished any outing with the troops, drilling them on the specific demo demands and videotaping in their faces while they were cuffed and dragged away. Afterwards, when he rested his equipment at his side, he could be seen—with a curled brow and taut lips—answering questions on camera for the network news.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 42



# NVI...



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And even in these difficult times, you'll find that we continue to improve the working environment for our primary customer, the independent producer who is working with his or her own money. On the culinary side, we added a better lunchtime menu, and cookies and fruit in the afternoon. On the equipment side we added five more D-2 machines, a Rank with Sunburst II for color correcting film

and tape, an AMS AudioFile and audio recording booth, color cameras for the 7 on-line edit rooms, and computerized off-line editing to the seventh floor. Speaking of floors, we'll be utilizing the second floor of our building on 17th Street for the first time in the coming year, bringing to a total of ten, the floors used for NVI customers and the necessary support services.

In terms of equipment, you'll be seeing the introduction of the first all D-2 editing suite in New York City with the installation of The Abekas A-82 Switcher in Edit A this fall, as well as the the addition of the exciting new Digital F/X Composium and Wavefront 3D animation to our established electronic graphics department.

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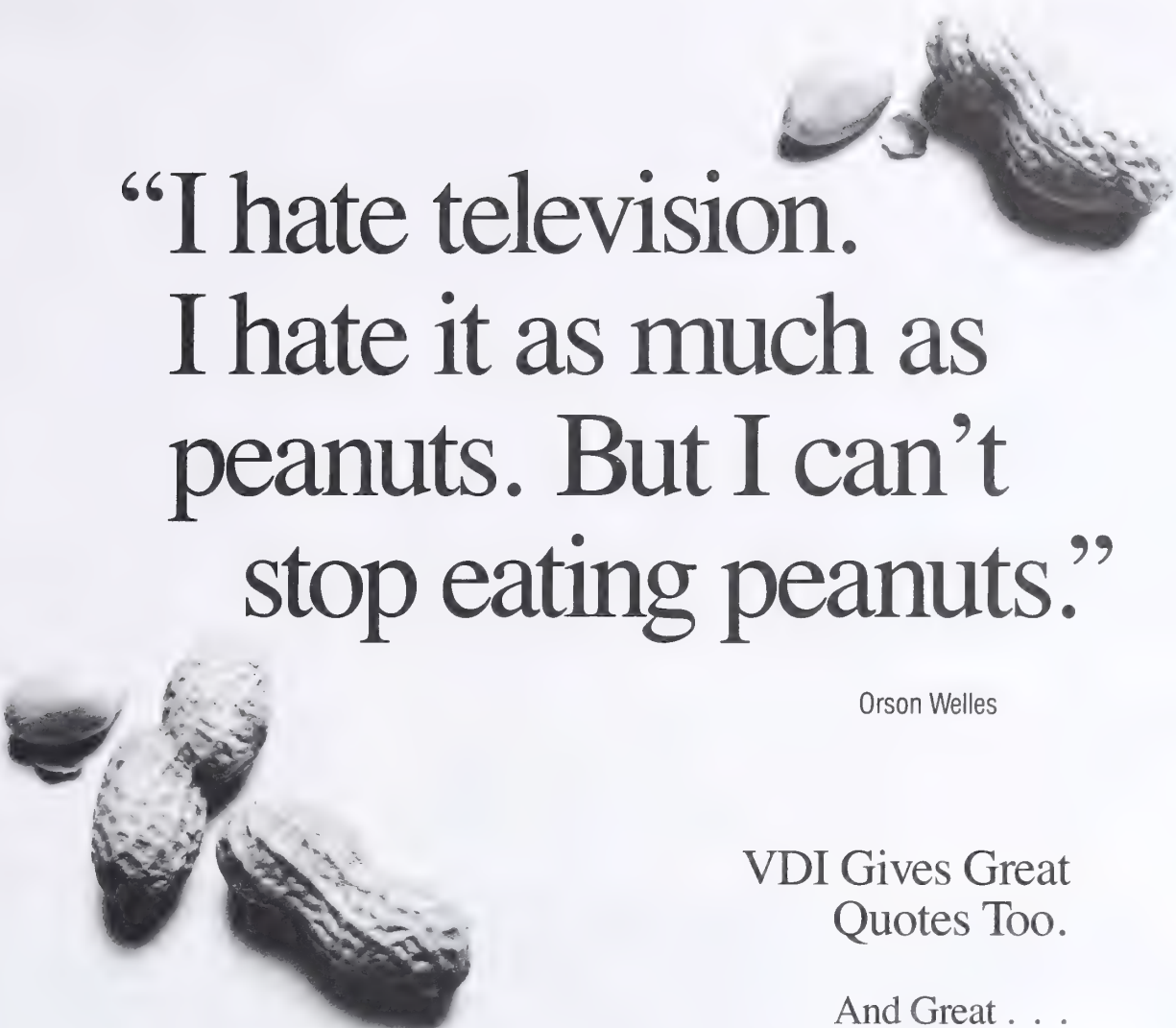
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**COVER:** In George Griffin's animated logo for the Comedy Channel, a snoozing pooch's tail flips the TV to the Comedy Channel, instantly transforming his environment from a humdrum living room to a wild tropical forest with a Caribbean beat. Independent animators like Griffin, as well as documentary and feature film and videomakers, have found opportunities to produce work through such major cable networks as MTV, HBO, and the Discovery Channel. Larry Jaffee's "Plugged In Producers" in this issue provides a guide to the cable networks. Also featured is an inside look at the BBC's public access programming unit. Drawing courtesy George Griffin.

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## A SIGN OF THE TIMES

### The Collective for Living Cinema's Screen Goes Dark

On a recent Saturday, stalwarts of the Collective for Living Cinema got together for an unhappy task of spring cleaning. The 18-year-old independent film exhibition and training center will, in the words of board president Yvonne Rainer, discontinue operations. No one will say that the Collective has closed for good, but it is vacating its facility at 41 White Street in downtown Manhattan, and its future remains uncertain.



Escalating rent and shrinking public funds have forced the Collective for Living Cinema in New York City to close after two decades.

Courtesy Anthology Film Archives

Founded by a group of filmmakers in 1973, the Collective grew with the independent film movement. The group started with weekly film screenings at an Upper West Side church and filmmaking workshops in a midtown loft. In 1975 the Collective moved downtown to Tribeca, converting a plastic tablecloth factory at 52 White Street into a full-fledged media center and theater. By 1982 the Collective gained prominence beyond the New York independent community. WNET-13 produced an hour-long documentary, *Ten Years of Living Cinema: The Uncommon Eye*, and the Collective organized a seven-week festival, *Ten Years of Living Cinema*, which included over 130 films showcased there between 1973 and 1983.

the *New York Times* described it as “an assortment of the best American independent films ever made.”

If the Collective expanded with the independent movement, its demise also reflects the strains facing many media arts centers, especially in New York’s recession economy. The Collective, an “urban pioneer” in the now gentrified Tribeca neighborhood, survived an acute crisis five years ago during the height of the city’s real estate boom. It was forced to relocate when, in separate actions, the Department of Consumer Affairs and the Buildings Department cited the Collective for failure to fireproof the projection booth and having a faulty certificate of occupancy. But the organization found new and improved—although considerably more expensive—quarters across the way at 41 White and was even able to expand its programming.

But the high costs of maintaining the space and hard times eventually took their toll. Beginning in June 1989, the Collective had to temporarily relocate at Anthology Film Archives while their landlord began new construction on the upper floors of their building. There the Collective continued undaunted, mounting the successful *How Do I Look?* series of gay and lesbian media and using the time to upgrade the White Street theater to 35mm projection. It was over a year and a half before the Collective was able to move back in, and by then, according to executive director Nancy Graham, a number of factors converged against them. Just at a time when the Collective needed promotional dollars to reestablish itself in its own space, public funding was reduced at all levels, including a five percent cut from the New York State Council on the Arts and zero funding from the National Endowment for the Arts Media Arts program. As if that wasn’t enough, a thief broke in, making off with valuable equipment and wounding morale.

What could have saved the Collective? “It may be saving itself right now,” says Graham, “with a radical reduction in spending and laying low for a while.” According to Rainer, the board has decided to retain the Collective as a corporate entity. In the meantime, says Third World Newsreel executive director Ada Griffin, who organized the 1988 *Young, British, and Black* series at the Collective, the city faces a vacuum in independent film exhibition. “The Collective was a different brand of people,” explains Griffin. “They understood film. As curators they were very critical, and their



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programs made an artistic statement. They took risks. But then, that's probably the reason they're no longer around."

RENEE TAJIMA

## **NEA ADVERSARIES STUNG BY POISON**

It appears the wind has finally gone out of Reverend Donald Wildmon's sails, if Congress' lackadaisical response to the American Family Association's latest campaign against a federally-funded art work is any measure. In March, shortly before Congress began hearings on the National Endowment for the Arts as part of the annual appropriations process, Wildmon sent a letter to legislators alerting them to "explicit porno scenes of homosexuals engaged in anal sex" in the "Homo" section of *Poison*, a feature film by independent producer Todd Haynes that received \$25,000 from the NEA. Never having seen *Poison*, Wildmon quoted from a review in *Daily Variety* that referred to "multiple glimpses of rear-entry intercourse and one of genital fondling" in the prison sequence of the film inspired by the writings of Jean Genet. (The *Variety* reviewer failed to note there are no shots of genitalia, and the sex and rape scenes are no more graphic than the average R-rated Hollywood film.)

Two years earlier, a similar letter from Wildmon triggered the furor over *Piss Christ*, a photograph by Andres Serrano, who had received NEA funding. This time, however, Wildmon's campaign met a different reaction. NEA chair John Frohnmayer, who had waffled during earlier attacks from the religious right, took a strong stand in defense of the film. Quickly calling a press conference, he asserted, "[*Poison*] is clearly not a pornographic film," continuing, "The film illustrates the destructive effect of violence and is neither prurient nor obscene.... It is the work of a serious artist dealing with a serious issue in our society." Haynes, too, defended the film during a blitz of interviews in the daily newspapers, on radio news shows, and on such television programs as *Entertainment Tonight*, *Personalities*, and Cable News Network's *Larry King Live*.

The flap quickly subsided. Congress apparently was in no mood to pursue Wildmon's allegations, barely mentioning the letter when they questioned Frohnmayer during the subcommittee hearings on the NEA's annual appropriations. The acquittal last year of Cincinnati, Ohio's Contemporary Arts Center—which had been charged with violating obscenity laws for exhibiting the work of Robert Mapplethorpe—by a jury of Midwesterners presumably helped stanch congressional fears of being labelled pornography supporters. In the end, the publicity only helped *Poison* at the box office. According to *Variety*, receipts for the first week were a healthy \$41,511, garnered by a single screen at the Angelika Film Center in New York City.

Although Wildmon may be down, he's not out. The indefatigable morality cop bought a permit to

build a UHF television station in his hometown of Tupelo, Mississippi. His programming could go national via cable television if a satellite superstation picks it up. He's also equipped with a license for a radio station, which will start operations soon.

One organization that monitors the doings of Wildmon and his ilk is People for the American Way. In an effort to systematically track censorship cases as they occur, they have instituted a research and public education project called Artsave. Information on the sundry and dispersed attacks of the religious right against the NEA and the arts is collected through surveys and a toll-free phone number (1-800-326-PFAW). Four months into the project, which was launched in January, Artsave has confirmed about 40 censorship incidents, according to People for the American Way's Michelle Richards. Between five and 10 phone calls come in every day, she reports, some concerning specific attacks on free expression in the arts and others simply to express concern or get information. The various cases have been collected in a newsletter called *Religious Right Update: Attacks on Public Sponsorship of the Arts*, available through: People for the American Way, 2000 MSt. NW, Ste. 400, Washington, DC 20036; (202) 467-4999.

Since the acquittal of the Contemporary Arts Center on obscenity charges, opponents of anti-obscenity language in arts legislation and NEA contracts have continued to fare well in the legal arena. In January, a federal court in Los Angeles struck down the anti-obscenity pledge that NEA grant recipients had been required to sign [see "Dirty Dancing" on page 19 of this issue]. The judge went further, however. Speaking to the issue of public sponsorship of the arts, he stated that a grant recipient should not be forced to forfeit his or her First Amendment rights when they receive public money.

Another pending court challenge to obscenity restrictions on NEA grantees may benefit from this ruling. This suit targets the language in the NEA's reauthorization legislation that requires the NEA to consider "general standards of decency" in awarding grants. The plaintiffs' attorneys argue it is constitutionally vague and discriminates on the basis of political viewpoints. This suit was added to an existing lawsuit filed by Karen Finley, Holly Hughes, Tim Miller, and John Fleck, the performance artists whose grants were vetoed by Frohnmayer last year despite recommendations by peer panels. The National Association of Artists Organizations and the National Campaign for Freedom of Expression have both joined the artists as plaintiffs. Representing the group is the American Civil Liberties Union, the Center for Constitutional Rights, and independent attorney Mary Dorman.

Meanwhile the White House is giving the NEA the cold shoulder. In his proposed budget for 1992, President Bush requested increases for the Smithsonian Institution, the National Gallery of Art, the Kennedy Center—all the government's





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cultural agencies *except* the NEA. For the first time in its 25-year history, the NEA would receive less money than the National Endowment for the Humanities. Bush's budget allocates \$178.2-million for the NEH compared to \$174.1-million for the NEA. There are signs, however, that Congress may be more sympathetic towards the arts endowment and increase its appropriations slightly over Bush's figure.

PATRICIA THOMSON

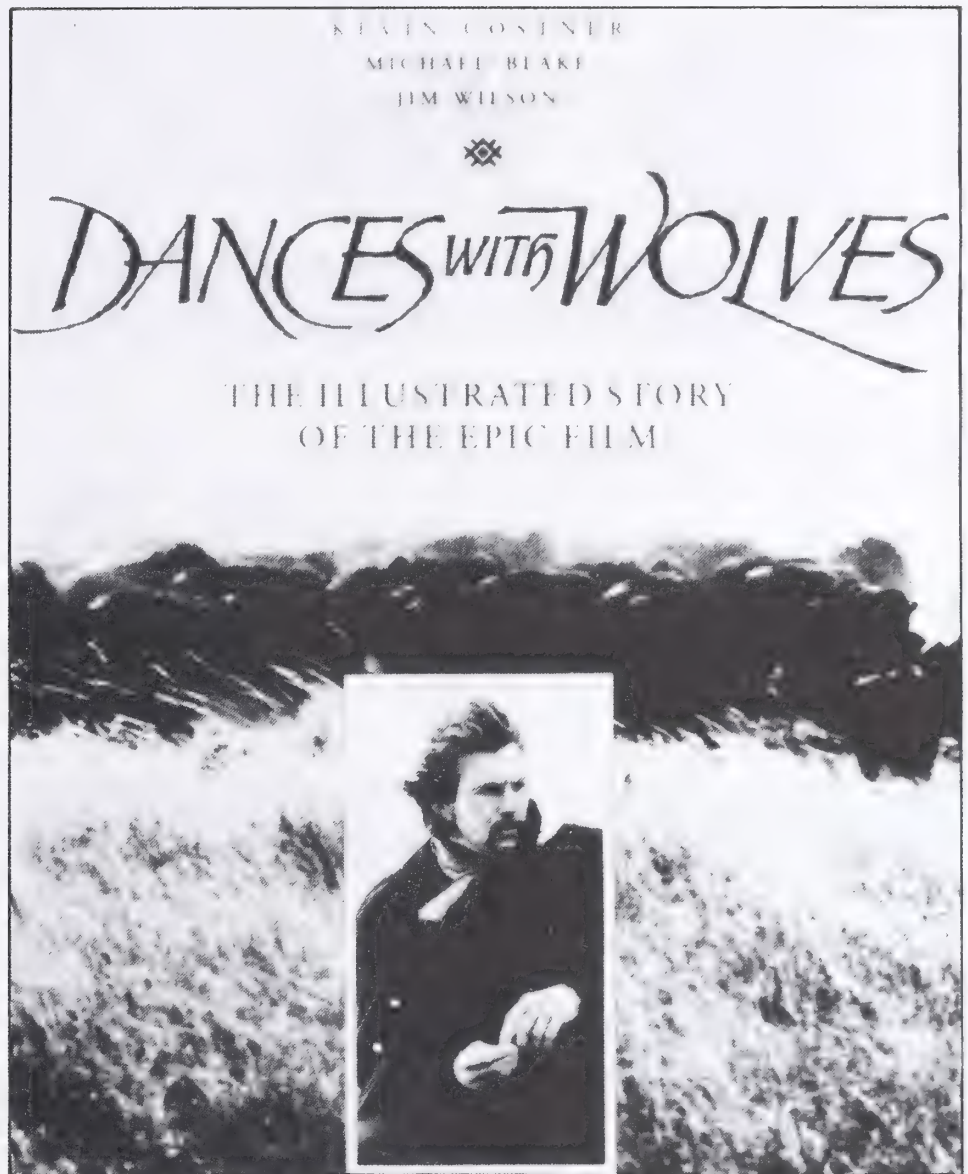
## PICTURE IMPERFECT FOR WOMEN IN TV

Among the remaining bastions of white male dominance—the priesthood, Congress, tenured university faculty—the television industry is still hanging in there. A new report entitled *What's Wrong with This Picture: The Status of Women on Screen and Behind the Camera in Entertainment TV* puts hard facts to common knowledge: women are excluded from any real and substantive presence, on- and off-screen.

Based on a year-long study and published by the National Commission on Working Women of Wider Opportunities for Women and Women in Film, the report provides strong ammunition in the battle against industry sexism. Eighty entertainment series were surveyed during the spring of 1990, representing a total of 555 screen characters. The report's author, Sally Steenland, delivers her findings in an effective matter-of-fact style that stings like statistical Scuds: e.g. "There are as many extra-terrestrial aliens on TV as Hispanic and Asian women and men." Steenland's research results are illustrated in detailed graphs that give affirmative action ratings for on-camera portrayals of female versus male characters with regard to age, economic status, and race/ethnicity, as well as percentages of female executives, producers, writers, and directors.

There are some bright spots in the picture. On screen, NBC's *A Different World* depicts an ensemble of intelligent young women, who also appear fully clothed. Off screen, the series employs female producers at a rate of 71 percent, female writers 74 percent, and female directors a whopping 96 percent. But the industry norm is a far different world. Television portrayals of women characters over 40 are almost nonexistent, and titillation still rules. In the realm of creative and financial control, women writers on entertainment programs average 25 percent, producers 15 percent, and directors a paltry nine percent.

In her study Steenland also attempts to establish a context for this snapshot of industry statistics. Interviews with industry professionals sketch a picture of the barriers to penetrating the male club that still prevail. But the numbers detailed in the 81-page report really tell the tale. Add this to your booklist, along with the 1989 Writer's Guild of America Foundation report on minority and women hiring practices. *What's Wrong with This Picture?* is available for \$20, plus \$4 postage and handling from: Wider Opportunities for Women,



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## FINISHING FUND FUELS UP

Everyone wants to be in the film business—even Texas oil men. Milton Howe, chair of Houston Studios, and J. Hunter Todd, chair of the Houston International Film Festival, have rustled together a dozen oil businessmen who have committed \$15-million for the creation of Cinema America, a source of finishing funds for independent feature films.

The selected applicants will not just be handed a check. Instead, Cinema America will guarantee the producers a line of credit. The organization will also provide technical assistance, sign the checks, and supervise the film's completion—including finding a distributor. Cinema America's goal is to fund four to five projects a year. Todd, a former producer and director, and Howe are willing to look at tapes or films in interlock. Projects will be chosen because of their marketability and will be given \$50,000 to \$1-million for completion. Todd and Howe say they prefer applications falling in the \$250,000 range. In return, Cinema America partners will be the first out, receiving their initial investment plus a negotiated fee once the box office dollars begin to roll in.

So far, Cinema America has received about 20 submissions, mostly from California independents, but hasn't made any definite funding decisions. Administrators admit they are creating guidelines as they go through the initial submissions. Some films that initially seem ideal for funding already have a distribution agreement and committed first-out money, making them ineligible for Cinema America funds. Independent producers with a marketable film in the can and no distribution agreement can fax a script synopsis with a status report and a financial request to: Milton Howe (713) 228-3418 or J. Hunter Todd (713) 965-9960.

MARY JANE SKALSKI

## THOUSANDS VIE FOR ITVS MINI-MILLIONS

Even though everyone anticipated an enthusiastic response to the Independent Television Service's (ITVS) first general solicitation this spring, the overwhelming number of applicants has managed to exceed all expectations. A bumper crop of approximately 2,000 applications is now piled high in ITVS' St. Paul office, according to executive director John Schott.

ITVS will dedicate between \$2- and \$3-million to this batch of applications, out of the combined \$12-million in production funds it is due to receive from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting for FY 1989/90 and 1990/91. Schott says that another general solicitation will take place this fall. During the summer a "directed mode" solicitation will also go out to the field, calling for entries



dealing with specific themes, determined on the basis of regional round-table discussions, phone and mail surveys, and statistical analyses of the applications received thus far. Individuals who applied to the general solicitation last March must draft a separate application in this category.

To process the applications currently on hand, ITVS will divide the country into eight regions: the Northwest; California, Nevada, and the Pacific Islands; the Southwest; the northern Midwest; the industrial Midwest; the deep South; the Southeast; and the Northeast. Each area will be represented by one regional panel, except for California and the Northeast, which will each have two, owing to the disproportionately large number of applicants from these areas. The regional panels will select about 200 finalists, who will then undergo a national panel review. Panels will be composed of curators, educators, and independent producers. Not surprisingly, given the response to the general solicitation, almost two-thirds of the producers recommended for panels had to decline, since they applied for grants themselves. The final winners will receive grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$300,000 for full funding.

In other news from ITVS, two new board members were recently chosen to fill vacancies left by videomaker Ed Emshwiller, who died in July 1990, and *American Playhouse* executive director David Davis, who resigned last June. They are James Fellows, president of the Central Education Network, and Richard Schmiechen, an independent producer (*The Times of Harvey Milk*). In addition, several more staff members are in place. The new director of business affairs is Kevin Martin, and filling interim posts are grants administrator Sheryl Mousley, business manager Kate Lehman, and administrative assistant Elizabeth Trumble.

Finally, the contract between ITVS and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting has been approved by both parties after a year and a half of on-going and often difficult negotiations, although, as of the beginning of May, it still has not been signed by CPB. According to its terms, control of the ITVS by-laws will be solely within the province of ITVS. This represents a victory for ITVS negotiators, as does the provision that administrative expenses will not come out of the \$6-million earmarked for production funds. Rather, CPB will provide approximately \$2-million in annual operating costs.

TOD LIPPY

*Tod Lippy is a filmmaker and writer living in New York City.*

## MILLER BREWING TOASTS AFRICAN AMERICAN FILMMAKERS

Twelve independent African American filmmakers were inducted into the Miller Brewing Gallery of Greats in Los Angeles in January. For almost 20 years the Gallery of Greats program has recog-

nized the achievements of blacks in different areas, including government, sports, and the arts. This is the first time that filmmakers have been selected. The honored filmmakers are Madeline Anderson, St. Clair Bourne, Charles Burnett, Ossie Davis, William Greaves, Charles Lane, Spike Lee, Michelle Parkerson, and Melvin Van Peebles. In addition, Oscar Micheaux, Spencer Williams, and Kathleen Collins Prettyman were awarded posthumously.

In addition to an honorarium and trip to Los Angeles for the induction ceremony, each honoree is the subject of a portrait by Louis Delsarte, currently on exhibit at the California African American Museum in Los Angeles and scheduled for a national tour. The portraits also appear on the calendars, T-shirts, and sweatshirts produced by Gallery of Greats program. Proceeds have traditionally gone to black educational programs. This year the recipient will be the Thurgood Marshall Education Fund.

Many of these filmmakers have been and continue to be important pioneers—from Micheaux, whose filmmaking activities from 1918 to 1948 created a distinct African American independent cinema, to Lee, whose commercial success is challenging conventional wisdom in the film industry about audiences for all-black films and is opening doors for other black feature film directors.

"We are breaking down barriers of not only discrimination, but of pure invisibility within the industry," attested documentarian Michelle Parkerson during the panel discussion *Visions, Views, and Voices: Filmmakers Discuss Their Craft*, which followed the portraits' unveiling ceremony. "My involvement in filmmaking was to broaden the context of how we define ourselves, to delve into the complexities of identities," Parkerson continued. "Men, women, and African Americans are not monolithic. My work has focused on African American women artists and the way their experiences reflect the larger reality that we all live as Africans in this country. I want [audiences] to be challenged, to dialogue across lines [despite] different ideologies, or different references, or gender biases, or other biases that go across racial and sexual lines."

Part of the function of the Gallery of Greats is the promotion of role models. In the case of this year's filmmakers, the awardees present positive examples both in their professional lives as directors and in the content of their films. Early pioneers within the industry include Bourne, who was one of the staff producers at *Black Journal*, the first television series by, for, and about African Americans, which premiered on public television in 1968. One of his coworkers was civil rights activist Madeline Anderson, who was eventually promoted to series producer—the first black woman to hold this position. She later moved on to become the first black female to executive produce a television series, *Infinity Factory*, in 1977. William Greaves, one of the originators of *Black Journal* and a prolific filmmaker, became

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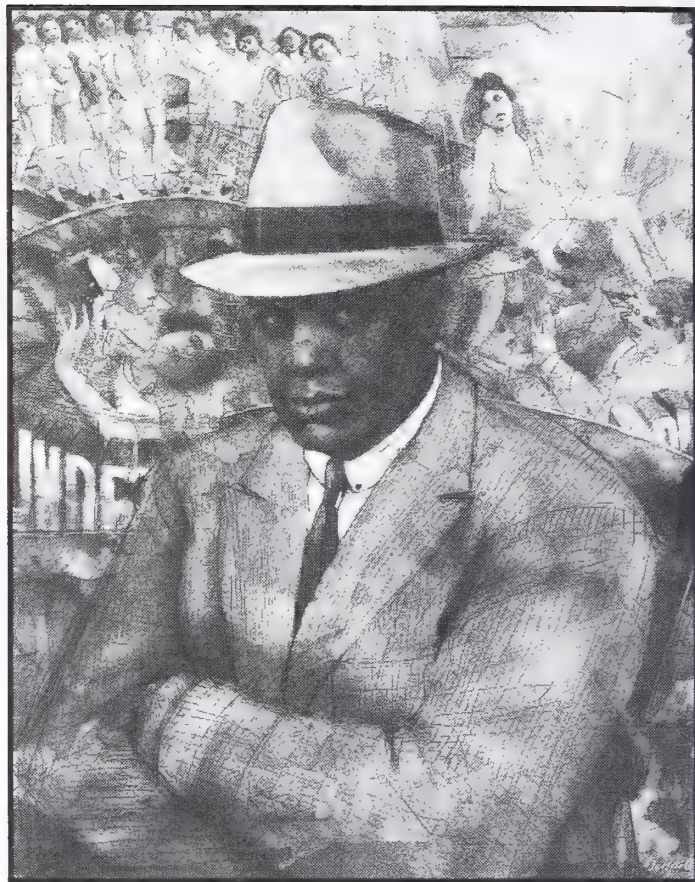
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the first African American to win an Emmy Award.

St. Clair Bourne, for one, was aware of the national boycott of Miller Brewing being spearheaded by gay activists protesting the financial support that Miller's parent company, Philip Morris, has given Senator Jesse Helms. After talking to artists in his community as well as marketing director Noel Hankin and other black executives at Miller, Bourne says he "made a difficult but informed decision to participate." The program is particularly important, Bourne emphasizes, "because it is an accumulation of information on significant black artists in one place, and it is being done in the corporate mainstream."

SPENCER MOON

*Spencer Moon is a filmmaker/writer who is currently coauthoring a book on black filmmakers.*

## NEW DISTRIBUTOR LAUNCHED IN LA

Within a year of Prestige and Fine Line Features opening up shop, another new film distribution company handling foreign and independent features has been launched. October Films, based in the Los Angeles area, recently signed on its first production, *Life Is Sweet*, by British director Mike Leigh (*High Hopes*). October was cofounded by Jeff Lipsky, former president of the motion picture division of Skouras Pictures, and Bingham Ray, a former vice president of marketing and

distribution at Avenue Entertainment. Lipsky is the brother of Prestige head Mark Lipsky.

Jeff Lipsky and Ray plan to distribute up to seven films a year. They appear to be looking for a more diverse spectrum of films than either Miramax's Prestige division or New Line's Fine Line Features, both of which are New York City-based. October is seeking feature-length English or foreign language films which can be fiction, documentary, or "anything in between," black and white or color, "from 16mm to 70mm." As Lipsky remarked, the company is a "lean and mean operation" that will handle only those films that both partners feel are of the highest quality.

*Life Is Sweet* (due for a November release) is the only film October is handling at this point, but Lipsky and Ray have begun scouting new work at festivals, consulting with producers and agents, and scouring production lists in various trade journals. Lipsky expects to begin signing other films at Cannes. He also is interested in hearing from independents with finished feature films who are actively seeking distribution.

Asked about the significance of the company's name, Lipsky responds that both partners were born in October, but also adds, "October is the month of revolutions, and we expect our films to be unique and revolutionary in both form and content."

For further information contact: October Films, Box 57647, Van Nuys, CA 91413; (818) 783-3200; fax: (818) 501-6605.

TL



## SEQUELS

Following their success with the *Gulf Crisis TV Project*, the Deep Dish TV public access satellite network is now trying to expand and solidify its base of regional correspondents and ability to do timely news shows ["Operation Dissidence: Access Producers Activate the Gulf Crisis TV Project," April 1991]. On an organizational level, the collective is working to turn its ad hoc regional bureaus in media arts centers, public access centers, and other institutions into a more formalized network of program suppliers. On a programming level, Deep Dish telecast *Anchors Away!*, a pilot for this kind of ongoing activist news show, on May 20, which acted as both a fundraising tool and a vehicle to get word out to camcordists and potential correspondents. The next satellite broadcast is scheduled for the fall. "The *Gulf Project* was too much, too fast," admits Deep Dish's Martha Wallner. "While we've wanted for some time to be more responsive to current events, that project put the cart before the horse, because of the war." Still, increased visibility helped Deep Dish in its fundraising efforts. Grants were obtained from the Paul Robeson Fund and the Media Arts Development Fund. "Other funders have let us in the door," says Wallner. "The war really made them wake up about the media, because of the news censorship issue which everyone became more aware of."



A number of staff changes are underway at the New York State Council on the Arts. In the Electronic Film and Media program, two of the four Program Analysts are leaving. **Jerry Lindahl** has moved over to another division within NYSCA, the State and Local Partnership Program. As of August, **Linda Gibson** will be working at California Newsreel in San Francisco as director of the African American Media Project. Due to NYSCA's budget crisis and hiring freeze, no replacements will be named. Also, Individual Artists Program director **Linda Earle** is now doing double-duty as interim director of the Visual Artists Program, following the departure of former VAP director **Carlos Gutierrez-Solana**, who resigned in order to pursue his work as an artist. As of June, the Independent Feature Project has a new executive director, **Catherine Tait**. She most recently served as director and cultural attaché with the Canadian Cultural Center in Paris. Previously she was arts promotion officer for the Canadian Consulate General in New York and manager of policy and planning for Telefilm Canada in Montréal. In Los Angeles **Claire Aguilar** has left the University of California at Los Angeles Film and Television Archive, where she was film programmer, to assume the post of manager of broadcast programs at public television station KCET.

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## ORDINARY PEOPLE?

A Debate on *Blood in the Face* and Documentary Methods

JENNINE LANOQUETTE

After seeing *Blood in the Face*, I feel like not all controversial social issue documentaries have to present both sides of a very strong point of view. I think in this film it's the structure that presents the point of view.

—Pam Yates

In the interest of creating a more sensational film, the filmmakers have foregone including any comments that throw into relief the implications of the things the radical right is saying.

—Don Derosby

At its Sundance Film Festival premiere last January, the documentary *Blood in the Face*, by Anne Bohlen, Kevin Rafferty, and James Ridgeway, immediately proved itself to be a film that elicits strong responses from viewers. After each screening, the question and answer session quickly turned into an active forum characterized by a stark polarity of opinion. The film focuses on a weekend convocation of neo-Nazis in the American Midwest during which they barbecue hamburgers, burn crosses, and give voice to their proudly racist rhetoric proclaiming, among other things, that the test of a true Aryan is in the ability to blush and thereby show "blood in the face." This diatribe is periodically interspersed with 1950s archival clips of American Nazi Party founder George Lincoln Rockwell, footage of Holocaust victims, a television news segment on the murder of radio talk show host Alan Berg, and a speech by Louisiana State Senator David Duke juxtaposed with photographs of him in KKK robes and Nazi uniform. Although many viewers found the film's unadorned presentation of hate-mongering rhetoric informative and alarming, others were disturbed by the shortage of counter-balance to the subjects' baldly racist views.

This pro and con discussion continued as the film began to circulate among exhibition outlets. Last December the New York City resource center on social issue film and video Media Network planned to include a clip from *Blood in the Face* in their Christmas benefit program until members of the host committee urged the organization's staff to see the rough cut and reconsider. After much debate, the staff reached the conclusion that, given the volatile nature of the subject matter, showing a fragment would not give viewers an adequate opportunity to digest the material. Instead, they suggested that the filmmakers show the entire film at a separate event, which never materialized.

For the selection committee of the Sundance Film Festival, however, there was never any question but to show *Blood in the Face*, and its exposure there was favorably received. Not long after the festival, though, Marc Weiss, executive director of the public television documentary series *POV*, which provided finishing funds for the film, withdrew it from the series' 1991 schedule after a near even split among members of the *POV* editorial committee on whether or not to air the film. Meanwhile, the film was receiving positive reviews in the press and playing theatrically to packed houses at New York's Film Forum.

In order to shed light on the debate the film has sparked, a number of film professionals were asked to express their views. What follows is an attempt to create a public discussion among these people, some of whom played a part in the decisions affecting its exhibition.

♦ ♦ ♦

**Lillian Jimenez**, director of the National Latino Film and Video Festival and member of Media Network's Benefit Hosting Committee: I have a history with the film from when I was at the Film Fund and the filmmakers applied for money there. People on the funding panels were very interested in the film, but one of the issues that kept resurfacing was the lack of narration. The filmmakers' premise was that these fringe right wing groups would have an opportunity to speak for themselves and ultimately hang themselves with their own reactionary rhetoric. But the people on those panels were very concerned about the difficulty involved in trying to create the fine balance between putting what would be very odious points of view on the screen and getting these people to hang themselves by virtue of what they're saying. While the panelists wanted to respect the wishes of the filmmakers, they were also very concerned about how much analysis the film would have concerning what the people were saying.

**Pam Yates**, documentary filmmaker: I made a film 10 years ago, called *Resurgence*, about the Ku Klux Klan and the American Nazi Party. In that film I did a parallel story of black women organizing in Mississippi and the Klan organizing in North Carolina, which is a more classical approach. At the time, we talked about whether or not giving the Klan too much screen time would actually promote their point of view.

After seeing *Blood in the Face*, I feel like not all controversial social issue documentaries have to present both sides of a very strong point of view. I think in this film it's the structure that presents the point of view. At first people laugh because they can't believe how weird these people are. Then it gets more and more serious until you see David Duke elected and you realize that the people who you thought were so funny are killers. The lack of narration offers an inside view, a fly-on-the-wall kind of look at who these people are. The filmmakers didn't want to use the classic public television documentary style.

**Don Derosby**, executive director of Media Net-



work: My take on the film is that in the interest of creating a more sensational film the filmmakers have foregone including any comments that throw into relief the implications of the things the radical right is saying. I would never say that every documentarian should contextualize their comments. But I think that documentarians do have to look at the material they are dealing with and think about how it can be presented sensibly and responsibly to an audience of various backgrounds and political dispositions. It seems to me that, given the sensitivity of this material, some context is in order, and I would have felt much more comfortable with the film had it been provided there.

One scene in particular comes to mind with two women sitting on a seat in front of a window talking about why they identify with the movement. The whole scene is very heartfelt; you're really pulled in by the sincerity with which these women are expressing their views. What struck me about it is the fact that they use the need to be a part of a community as the logic for why they're involved. But the filmmakers do absolutely nothing to contextualize that information. Basically, this is a call to people to become part of a community in which your ideas will be respected, where you don't have to worry about what you say at the table. But there's a need to take that thinking to its logical conclusion, because this community is one which tells people it's okay to damage others.

**Harry Chancey, Jr.**, senior vice president and director of the Broadcast Center of WNET and member of the POV editorial committee: I am predisposed to feel positive about the film strictly on the basis of my own sense of "watch and never forget." It is not far different from the current use of the videotape of the Los Angeles Police Department which has also reminded people in such powerful ways that these things exist, though we might like to think otherwise.

But I'm a broadcaster, so I look at the film not only in and of itself but also in the context of the broadcast medium. What I've been puzzling over is the appropriate way to show a film of this nature. Given the way people watch television—jumping around the dial and so forth—they might land on such a film without having made a conscious choice to watch it, as they would have in a theatrical context, and be confused or angered or whatever.

I did recommend to the filmmakers at one point that I was missing some sense as to the scope of the movement. What is this group? Where does it come from? For whatever reasons they decided to keep the film as we now see it despite suggestions and positive criticisms they received. But even without that narrative context, I still find the film extremely chilling.

**Deirdre Boyle**, critic and instructor at the New School for Social Research: For me the power of the film is that it presents evil with its banal, even benign, face and shows it as the people living next door who could be quite familiar and unspectacular.

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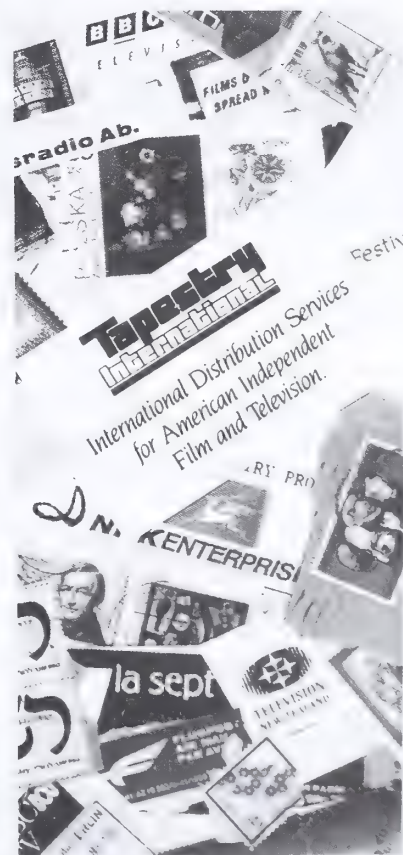
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Even the bonfire scenes in the film, which one could so easily have turned into much more menacing imagery, seem like a large barbecue.

I think the film's strength is in the fact that the filmmakers' presence is not constantly calling your attention to a way of thinking about what you're seeing—this is terrible or this is wonderful by contrast. To present it as part of the American way does a service to the viewing audience, because when something like this is shown as an aberration it is far easier for us to distance ourselves from the fact that it exists. To be able to reckon with it, we have to see it as part of the human experience.

**Jimenez:** I think these people do come across as being human, and that's a credit to the filmmakers. But I don't know what it is they're coming out of to embrace this ideology. I remember this one scene with people dressed in Nazi regalia, and this young, attractive, blond woman with these really big blue eyes says, "I'm a computer programmer." She seems very sweet and nice, but then she says, "I'm for the white people." And I remember thinking, "Why the hell is this woman involved with this? She seems to have a range of possibilities open to her. What's propelling her to embrace this ideology when superficially she seems so normal?" The film doesn't have a strong enough analysis to enable the audience to contextualize what these people are saying.

**Boyle:** Those who say that the film does more to further the cause of the radical right than to counteract it are assuming that the viewing audience isn't capable of making any judgments. They are also assuming that the filmmakers' perspective doesn't come across in the film, and I think it does. It's not foregrounded, but it's not invisible either. And I think those people who would like the film

to be more dogmatically critical are unwilling to recognize that maybe an audience that is not consumed with such issues would still be able to recognize the destructiveness inherent in the viewpoint of the Klan members.

**Yates:** I'm from a coal town in Pennsylvania, and I think people there can be much more politically sophisticated than people in New York. So I don't believe that there is this average audience out there. What that implies is an uneducated audience. I think people who are uneducated can sometimes be more politically sophisticated because they think about their own interests more. People will make up their own minds.

**Derosby:** The dichotomy is not between education and lack of education. The dichotomy is between people who read film with a fine-toothed comb and can find that subtle nuance which throws everything else into a different light versus people who are used to watching television and have a very different approach to looking at media. This film, in trying to make sense of what these people are saying, uses a set of rather subtle gestures which are interspersed at rather large intervals. I think the question of how that's going to be read needs to be explored.

The simple fact of the matter is that different people read this film differently. And given what's at stake, the well-being of millions of Americans who have been subjected to hate crimes, doesn't it make the filmmakers feel uncomfortable that their film is an open document that is subject to interpretation? Obviously, open documents have great virtues. But given the sensitivity of this topic, how do the filmmakers feel about creating an open document?

**Boyle:** I think that argument perpetuates the discrepancy between television production aimed at



**Two members of the S.S. Action group attend a national gathering of the radical right in the controversial documentary *Blood in the Face*.**

Photo: Charlie Arnot, courtesy Right Thinking Productions

12-year-olds and an intelligent style of documentary production. I don't think this is the best film that's ever been made; it has its limitations. But I'm just as fearful of proscriptive attitudes that would require that a particular stance be taken and a particular style be assigned to a filmmaker dealing with a subject like this. I think that that's just as dangerous.

**Jimenez:** The film is very threatening. I don't think it's the same for white people. Their points of reference are very different. I think the filmmakers went into this with the best intentions. They went into it to raise a discussion about racism in a way that has not been done before. But I think intentions are very different than strategy. And that keeps surfacing time and time again when you talk about racism—how insidious it is, how we operate out of these assumptions that get perpetuated through the media, through the popular culture, and that we often don't question. That's what I feel the filmmakers didn't do, they didn't question their assumptions.

**Sylvia Morales, documentary filmmaker, faculty member at University of Southern California, and POV editorial committee member:** I showed it to

a class I teach at USC. And one of my students, a black woman named Rochelle, made a very perceptive observation. Her feeling was that these people were unimportant. She knew about them. To her they were just hicks; they were small time. It didn't make any sense to her to show them. She wanted to see a film that would show the people in power. She said, "There are a lot of people who have a lot of power, who are presidents of corporations. But you never see the Ku Klux Klan robes inside their car trunks. Those are the people to fear."

But there was disagreement from the other students in the class who hadn't experienced these kinds of people as she had. They were surprised to learn that this activity is going on. I agreed with both sides of the discussion. When Rochelle spoke I thought, "My God, she's so right. I absolutely agree with her." And then again I agreed with the other students who said, "Wait a minute, I would want to know about this." What the film brought out for me was the gap between the perception of racism for white and nonwhite people.

**St. Clair Bourne, documentary filmmaker:** The film is well-intentioned but it has the classic flaw of the white left in that it's just white people talking to white people. It does expose the radical right but it doesn't provide a context, so it leaves people feeling ambiguous about it. If that's the filmmakers' intent then that's good, but I think they think they are actually exposing the maliciousness of these people, which they do in a way but it's limited because there's no context.

**At the Cohoctah, Michigan, gathering of the Ku Klux Klan and sympathizers, a bust of Adolf Hitler was given a place of honor, filmed by the makers of *Blood in the Face*.**

Photo: Charlie Arnot, courtesy Right Thinking Productions



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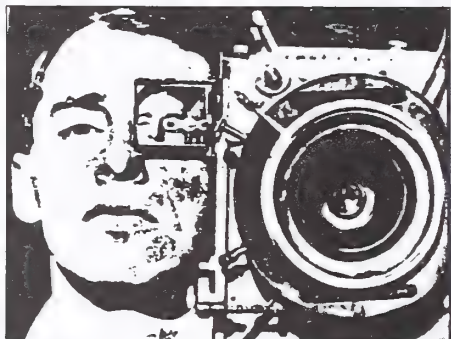
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This film speaks to the lack of creativity by leftist artists and why the left doesn't make many inroads among the nonwhite people. They say the same things in the same corny ways. I can't say that they're wrong. They have good intentions. But they just can't get out of their own cultural context, even when they think they have.

**Chancey:** Is it not also possible that there is recognition in the fact that we are looking at white people? White people looking at white people who are in these aberrant roles is perhaps a very compelling thing. In the sixties white people were thrown out of certain black circles and told to go fix their own backyard. Isn't this film to a certain extent, at the same time that it's angering black people, also saying to white people, "For God's sake, fix your own backyard"?

**Derosby:** There's a large group out there who are less clear-headed on how they feel about civil rights versus the oppressive actions of hate-mongering groups, and I think the film could push them in either direction. I also think that the independent media community wants to stand for something more than that. The notion that we could recruit a handful of people for the radical right is something I feel profoundly uncomfortable with, even if it's only a handful.

**Chancey:** People say, "Wouldn't you feel a responsibility if people started writing to these organizations saying they wanted to join?" I have to state it in the reverse: By not showing this film are we going to prevent something that is going to happen anyway, when there are also millions of people who could be better armed with the knowledge that there are groups out there like this, and that they have got to be dealt with?

**Derosby:** There were a number of people involved in the discussions at Media Network who said, "Look, what's at stake here is my well-being as I walk down the streets of Brooklyn, New York. That's what we're dealing with. I've been victimized before, it will happen again." These were blacks, Hispanics, gays, lesbians, people of religious difference. Those are the terms on which this film deserves to be judged, because that's the terrain in which this film chooses to toil.

*Jennine Lanouette is a freelance writer living in New York.*

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## PRESERVING YIDDISH CINEMA

### The National Center for Jewish Film at Brandeis

KAREN ROSENBERG

A once-thriving Yiddish-language film industry ended in the forties, with the mass slaughter of Jews in Europe and the assimilation of Jews in the Americas. But in the fifties, when the audience for Yiddish features was watching television, a New York producer of Yiddish features in the 1930s and forties named Joseph Seiden scoured labs and movie theaters and found part or all of 30 feature films made in Yiddish. In 1976, his private collection became the basis of the National Center for Jewish Film, housed at Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts. While the center now has many other films on subjects related to Jewish life, in various languages, it is largely known for its Yiddish film collection.

Fragments of 64 Yiddish features are now in the library, but some are on flammable nitrate stock, and a few others are infected with a contagious virus called acetate deterioration—sometimes known as “the vinegar syndrome” because that’s what the affected film smells like.

“I could slap prints of 40 films on tape and sell them tomorrow, but we have a commitment to restore all our Yiddish-language features and to make them accessible to audiences. Films on nitrate or in danger of immediate disintegration are being restored first. And we often spend extra thousands to redo the soundtracks and add supplementary subtitles,” executive director Sharon Pucker Rivo told me.

For example, it took about \$100,000 to restore *The Dybbuk*, a 1937 Yiddish feature. The operating budget of the center is about \$150,000 per year. Funds have come from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities (recently renamed the Massachusetts Cultural Council), as well as from

private sources. But major cutbacks in government funding—such as a recent 80 percent reduction in support to the center from the state—have made private donors increasingly important. Rivo now spends more time on the road, lecturing and raising money.

The restoration of each film is funded separately, often by a donor with special sympathy for the project. For example, the family of Miriam Saul Krant, who is associate director of the center, financed work on the Yiddish film *Uncle Moses* which was completed in 1989. The Yiddish

about 100 Yiddish features, including silents with Russian intertitles, but based on Yiddish theater pieces and starring principals from the Yiddish stage,” she noted. Sometimes the exhibition of films in the collection leads to new acquisitions. For instance, while touring Yiddish films in Brazil, courtesy of the Goethe Institute, they heard about a nitrate print of a rare Yiddish film from the thirties with Portuguese subtitles.

The center also distributes some German and Israeli fiction films, some European and US documentaries, and early US silents. All of these fea-

tures and shorts in some way concern Jews and Judaism, but they are not necessarily focussed on Judaism. For example, *Jack Levine*, by David Sutherland of Newton, Massachusetts, is a documentary on a painter of Jewish background who uses some motifs from the Jewish tradition. Why does Sutherland work through the center? “I haven’t been very successful in getting my film to Jewish institutions like synagogues, community centers, and student organizations,” he told me. “The center is getting *Jack Levine* from my distributor, Home Vision, which is owned by Films, Inc. Rivo has dealt with Films, Inc., before and handled Jewish



**Death dances with the maiden in *The Dybbuk*, a Yiddish-language film made in 1937 which has been newly restored and subtitled by the National Center for Jewish Film Library.**

Courtesy National Center for Jewish Film Library

soundtrack was retranslated into English by Sylvia Fuks Fried, who teaches Yiddish at Brandeis, so that the subtitles would be comprehensible to modern audiences. “My parents were immigrants and New York Jews, and this film reflects their time,” Krant said. “It’s a way of honoring their memory.”

In addition to restoring films, the center is acquiring more prints. Rivo and Krant continue to search for Yiddish films. “We think there are

distribution [of Hollywood features] for them.” The center has distribution agreements with Swank and some of the studios as well.

Besides its film rental business, the center is involved in video sales, marketing half-inch videocassettes of material to which it owns the rights. Sales to individuals and—at a higher price—institutions help the center to amortize costs and to fund new preservation projects. But Rivo sees the center as a serious cultural venture, rather than a commercial one, and so, for example, she will not tape and hawk unrestored prints. The center is also concerned that films and tapes with sensitive content (like anti-Semitic material) be shown in an educational context. For example, a video introduction is going to be added to a Nazi propa-



"How did that melody go? Let's hear it again," says a character in the 1932 Yiddish film *Uncle Moses*. The preservation of such films helps keep alive a vanishing language and culture.

Courtesy National Center for Jewish Film Library



ganda film which the center has lent to an exhibition at the Massachusetts College of Art about the Terezin concentration camp. A printed guide will be handed to all visitors to the exhibition, reinforcing the fact that the film is a complete fabrication, Rivo said.

The film, called *Der Führer schenkt den Juden eine Stadt* (literally, *The Führer Gives a City to the Jews as a Present*), was supposed to be released commercially during the Third Reich to assure the world that everything at Terezin—Theresienstadt in German—was fine and proper. "It has high production values and is so convincing that it needs an introduction," says Michele Furst of the Exhibitions Department at the college, which curated the show. Some inmates of the camp made clandestine art works that depict another, and much darker, side of Terezin. These are the primary focus of the exhibition. The center has provided a restored print of 14 minutes of the film,

together with a newly discovered eight-minute clip it obtained from the Israel Film Archive and Yad Vashem, the museum of the Holocaust in Israel.

And, finally, the center offers research opportunities to those interested in Jewish history and culture. At the center and the American Jewish Historical Society, also located at Brandeis, are film posters, stills, and papers related to Jews and the movies. Also, about 3,000 cans of film are owned by the center, and most of it is available for study. "People must come to us to see material that is fragile, rare, sensitive in its content, or that hasn't yet been restored," said Rivo. "There's a problem only if we have the sole existing copy of a film. Then we'll transfer it to video or make a

print if the researcher will pay for it." Steenbecks, for viewing 16mm and 35mm material, and video facilities on the Brandeis campus must be booked in advance and can be paid for on a sliding scale or by the exchange of services.

Diverse people, ranging from a dancer interested in movement in Jewish film to ABC employees gathering historical footage for the series *War and Remembrance*, have made use of this resource. Critic J. Hoberman told me that no source was more important than the center for his book on Yiddish film, *Between Two Worlds*, which will appear in conjunction with a series of Yiddish films at the Museum of Modern Art in New York that opens in November 1991.

The MoMA series, which draws on the center's collection for most of its offerings, is a symbolic event. Not only does it demonstrate the acceptance of Yiddish-language movies as part of cinematic history, it also shows that mainstream US cultural institutions are more open to the history of Jewish culture. Yiddish speakers may be dwindling, but interest in Jewish ethnic identity is by no means dying out in the US. Museums, educational institutions, and film festivals are exposing new audiences to Yiddish-language cinema and to the concept of Jewish film in general.

*Karen Rosenberg writes on film for publications in the US and Western Europe. Her recent articles have appeared in e.p.d. film in Germany and the Boston Globe.*

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## DIRTY DANCING

### Lewitsky versus the National Endowment for the Arts

SHELDON SIPORIN

Obscenity is normally a judgment of a jury of citizens applying "community standards." In a pluralistic democracy, there is no nationwide standard of obscenity. Thus, the NEA rule violated due process.

*[Editor's note: This article is presented only for the purposes of educating independent film- and videomakers and is not to be taken as legal advice.]*

The National Endowment for the Arts' certification requirement is dead; obscenity law is alive and well—and "decency" survives. The NEA waltz around the parquet of Congress has swirled onto the floors of the courts. At least one case filed in the halls of justice has tap danced its way to decision. As the NEA abandoned its funding restrictions, a California federal judge declared them unconstitutional. How did this result? And where do we go from here?

Bella Lewitsky Dance Foundation is a well regarded modern dance company. It has created and performed in the US and foreign countries and has been a recipient of NEA grants since 1972. In 1990 the foundation was awarded an NEA grant of \$72,000, which was to be used in part for the development of new work. The foundation then submitted a request for advance in the sum of \$15,000. Under the restrictive legislation adopted in 1989 (Sec. 304 of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act), the foundation was required to complete a "certification" that it complied with all "Terms and Conditions" of grant awards. This was the infamous certification which many arts organizations refused to sign. The "Terms and Conditions" included a requirement that grant recipients certify that none of the funds awarded would be used to "promote, disseminate, or produce" material which might be considered "obscene" in the judgment of the NEA.

The Lewitsky Foundation manager took this stricture in stride. She completed the certification. However, she crossed out the paragraph containing the obscenity provision and initialed it. The foundation actually received the \$15,000 advance it had requested. Belatedly, an alert attorney for the NEA spotted the stratagem. A harsh letter was sent to the foundation, advising them that they were bound by *all* terms of the grant. The foundation might have opted to spend the money anyway and incur NEA wrath. Instead, the foundation filed a lawsuit in US District Court (for the central district of California). The lawsuit sought to have the advance certification rule struck down as unconstitutional. Judge John Davies, in this bicentennial of the Bill of Rights, granted the foundation's motion for summary judgment.

#### THE FIFTH AMENDMENT

The judge relied in part on guarantees contained in

the Fifth Amendment. The Fifth Amendment, in addition to protecting against "self-incrimination," also guarantees "due process." Here, Judge Davies found that the provisions on obscenity were unconstitutionally "vague." This violated the due process right of "fair warning": One should not be penalized for doing something that is not clearly forbidden. The Lewitsky Foundation had no telepathic power to "mind read" the NEA to learn what they thought was obscene. The NEA might be able to act selectively or arbitrarily since the standards were unclear, and that is unfair. A well-intentioned filmmaker trying to create a masterful and explicit film biopic of, for example, Marilyn Monroe, might cross the line. So might Lewitsky.

But the NEA had anticipated this logic. Accordingly, the NEA lawyers said that they were adopting the standards of the leading US Supreme Court case on obscenity, *Miller vs. California* (413 US 15, 1973). *Miller* set forth the appealingly offensive test of obscenity, which cynics term the I-know-it-when-I-see-it rule. *Miller* upheld the criminal conviction of an entrepreneur who made unsolicited mailings of illustrated brochures hawking his books and films on topics like "marital intercourse." The court found the brochures (which depicted masturbation and anal) to be obscene under a three-pronged test. Something is obscene if it 1. appeals to prurient interests, 2. is patently offensive, and 3. lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value.

The NEA, by adopting the obscenity definition of the US Supreme Court, felt it tangoed on firm ground. Yet, the three prongs of *Miller* are a tricky—one might say devilish—test. How does Lewitsky, or a filmmaker, use this test to satisfy the NEA? Can something be "appealing" and "offensive" at the same time? Maybe Freud would know.

Judge Davies, whatever his philosophical bent, was not in a position to find *Miller* unconstitutionally "vague." However, he tuned into the procedural safeguards afforded by *Miller* which were unavailable to the NEA grantee. First, even if the NEA declared it adhered to the *Miller* test, there was nothing to make this policy binding. Also, legal obscenity turns on a full adversarial trial with defined rules and an impartial judge. Lastly, obscenity is normally a judgment of a jury of citizens applying "community standards." In a pluralistic democracy, there is no nationwide standard of obscenity. Thus, the NEA rule violated due process.



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One should not be penalized for doing something that is not clearly forbidden. The Lewitsky Foundation had no telepathic power to mind read the NEA to learn what they thought was obscene.

### THE FIRST AMENDMENT

An artist, whether performer or filmmaker, must have freedom to explore and experiment. The purpose of government funding of the arts is to nourish the independent growth of creative individuals, not stifle it. Artists are subject to starvation, not to mention abuse and rejection. The patron's role is to promote, not proscribe. Judge Davies noted the "chilling effect" upon an artist, the "fear of violating the vague terms of the certification," which might inhibit the creativity of those who are warmed by the NEA hearth. One can't pirouette with cold feet.

The NEA argued that other funding is available, that the NEA is not the only grant-awarding authority. Judge Davies pointed out the reality that much NEA support requires "matching" grants or cofunding. NEA outcasts might lose their secondary funding with the loss of the NEA "imprimatur of merit." The Rockefeller Foundation, which itself makes grants to artists, joined in the lawsuit as amicus for this very reason. The private grantor is not totally divorced from the judgments of the NEA. You promenade your partner.

### SUBSIDIES

There is another issue, somewhat more subtle, raised by the NEA, which has significance beyond this case. NEA counsel argued that there is no right, constitutional or otherwise, to receive an NEA grant. Government may give, and it may take away. It may award money to one but not another. I may be, at least in my mind, a talented and promising filmmaker with a message dying to be said, yet the government is not obligated to fund my exercise of free expression. It need not supply film stock or ballet slippers.

This is true. Judge Davies pointed out that, nevertheless, government may *not* deny a benefit to a person on a basis that infringes upon constitutionally protected interests, especially free

speech. The US Supreme Court asserted this in the case of *Perry v. Sindermann* (408 US 593, 1972). That matter dealt with an untenured college teacher in Texas who alleged that he was denied reappointment because he publicly disagreed with the Board of Regents. Davies concluded that "once the plaintiffs were chosen for grants, on the basis of artistic merit, the government may not place restrictions" which violate the First Amendment. The artist's right of expression is inviolate, whether writ on paper or done en pointe.

Judge Davies' logic in *Lewitsky* seems sound. Despite action by Congress to remove the certification requirements confronted by *Lewitsky*, such issues are not quite dead. There is litigation in New York raising issues parallel to those of *Lewitsky*. *New School for Social Research vs. Frohnmayer*, an action brought in Manhattan Federal Court, was recently settled out of court to the tune of *Lewitsky*. The NEA agreed not to apply the old certification standard.

A fox trot with the fast-stepping NEA may indeed entail dancing with wolves. A lull in the tempo is not the end of the ball. The current NEA authorizing legislation contains prefatory language which calls on the NEA to "develop" regulations ensuring that funded work takes into consideration "general standards of decency and respect for the diverse beliefs and values of the American people." To date, no such regulations exist. The phrase "general standards of decency" has less substance than the term "obscenity," or so a judge like Davies might hold. Perhaps that language is, as lawyers say, "mere verbiage." Recently, the American Civil Liberties Union filed a suit in Los Angeles federal district court on behalf of performance artists Karen Finley, Holly Hughes, Tim Miller, and John Fleck challenging the decency language. The issues raised are similar to those raised in *Lewitsky*.

There is also a provision which requires an artist or institution to give back Endowment funds if the funded work is found by a court to be criminally obscene after exhaustion of appeals. The violator may then be barred from funding for three years. Recall that the standard of obscenity is the wispy *Miller* test, and one may become a trifle nervous, perhaps chilled. Those triple tines are cutting.

Filmmakers should be aware that states often have criminal and civil obscenity statutes that cover both literature and motion pictures. For example, New York State penal code section 235 and CPLR section 6330 have been invoked by district attorneys and corporation counsel, usually against "hard core" porn. *Redlich v. Capri Cinema* (43 Ad2d 27, 1973) was a typical case which dealt in part with *Behind the Green Door*, a film which heralded Marilyn Chambers, the ex-Ivory Soap girl. The film was sold as a sex flick and prosecuted accordingly.

Is obscenity properly partner for the NEA at all? Some organizations promoting free expression find the linkage incongruous. Further, if an



artistic work is judged by local community standards, should the NEA "withdraw" funding from a work which is held "okay" by one state court but rejected by another? Suppose Mapplethorpe's art was "approved" by juries in 49 states but damned in one? Time may clarify the NEA provisions, and obscenity law may itself evolve—or sprout more prongs.

Conscientious filmmakers who capture more than rough sex on grainy celluloid are not easily cast as wolfish sexploitors, assuming they ever grab the attention of the gendarmes. An artistic work must be viewed "as a whole" before it can be judged legally "obscene." A film which has "serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value" taken as a whole is not obscene, even if certain scenes are lurid. Thus, *I Am Curious Yellow*, a Swedish film by director Vilgot Sjöman with what critics called "shockingly" explicit sex scenes, was held not obscene by a New York Federal Courtcase, which preceded *Miller (US vs. A Motion Picture Film)*, 404 F.2d 196, [1968]. Mapplethorpe's photographic exhibit, consisting of hundreds of prints, was recently declared not obscene by a jury, even though a few photos raised eyebrows.

Filmmakers who are lucky recipients of NEA grants attract attention along with awards. But this recognition must imply that their work has "serious value." The courts often use "critical acclaim" as a measure of artistic worth. *Carnal Knowledge* was held not obscene in *Jenkins vs. Georgia* (418 US 153), in part because it won Ann-Margret an Oscar and was praised in *Saturday Review*. In that case the US Supreme Court held that no jury could legally find that film obscene. *Carnal Knowledge* looks tame today. Yet a racier film, *Sexual Freedom in Denmark* (which showed oral sodomy), was held not obscene by a New York court in *People vs. Hilty* (324 NYS 2d 164), since the photography was high quality and the film was reviewed somewhat approvingly in *Hollywood Reporter*. *Miller's* trident seems blunted by the "serious value" point.

The "imprimatur of merit" of an NEA award is itself "critical acclaim" that establishes the "serious value" of an art work. The "serious value" of a piece is *not* (according to the US Supreme Court) based on "local community standards." Rational juries and judges look to informed and ideally impartial artistic standards. Only inverted logic allows a court to vilify an artist endowed by peers with a grant of distinction. Only inverted logic allows the NEA to withdraw its endorsement when artists are impaled on obscenity's legal pitchfork.

Perhaps the NEA will eventually end its pas de deux with obscenity.

*Sheldon Siporin is a member of the New York State Bar Association Committee on Motion Pictures and Video and is in private practice as an attorney.*

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## EXTREMES IN EVERYDAY LIFE

## Jeanne Finley on Jesus Sightings, Matricide, Museums, and Other Topics

JANICE DRICKEY

San Francisco video artist Jeanne C. Finley delights in calling into question the basic truths we learned as children from our parents, our teachers, and the media. "We come out of a certain set of values," says the 35-year-old artist and university professor. "We come from a family, and that family functions within a larger culture. You are shaped by that, and I don't think there's any way you can successfully throw off all of that indoctrination. That becomes who you are.

"Yet," she continues, "we find ourselves, as we grow up, as we develop, often standing in opposition to that structure we're composed of. Suddenly, you can no longer live within that structure or abide by its guidelines, and yet that structure is the fundamental, primary aspect of which you are made. That creates tension, and I think the work is a lot about that tension. When do you say 'no'? When do you say, 'Even though that's what I'm made of, that doesn't work for me. I have to find another way to understand the world'?"

Finding another way to understand the world through her work has brought Finley both international acclaim and criticism. A 23-minute video commissioned by the Oakland Museum, *At the Museum: A Pilgrimage of Vanquished Objects* (1989), takes viewers on a Dick-and-Jane museum tour, complete with a sometimes caustic male narrator and ironic ticker tape messages running along the bottom of the screen ("The term curator is derived from the Latin *curatus*"). Along the way, the futility of this attempt to catalogue culture in a truly representative way and the hidden ideology in selectively removing objects from their historical context to fit them into "little labeled boxes" is revealed. "Some people at the museum took it personally," she remembers. "I realized that the criticism of the inherent contradictions in the documentary process was being read as cynicism towards the efforts of the mu-

seum curators, which was not my intention at all."

From her very first video work, *I Saw Jesus in a Tortilla* (1982), the story of a New Mexico woman who tries to use the media to share her vision of Jesus with the world, Finley's use of irony has sometimes been misunderstood. "I believe," Finley says, "that Ramona Barreras believed very sincerely in this face of Jesus on the tortilla. Of that I have no doubt. It's when you take that personal experience and try to share it—and

in photojournalism and a graduate degree in photography, Finley began exhibiting her photos in slide shows, in order to create works that were "more narrative in nature" than still displays. Teaching herself to shoot and edit video, she moved on to installation pieces that combined projected slides with video and live elements. A *New York Times* critic praised her 1986 *Common Mistakes* when it appeared in multimedia installation form at P.S. 1 in Long Island City, Queens, as

"an uncommonly effective example of an art form too often mired in its production values."

Structured around definitions of the words fallacy, error, accident, and blunder, *Common Mistakes* combines voiceover narration, silhouetted interviews with live subjects, news footage, and an old black and white educational film. The work juxtaposes personal mistakes, such as a child running while holding a pair of scissors, tripping on a rug, and impaling herself, with mistakes that have left profound and damaging effects on the world, such as a belief in manifest destiny which led administrators of the Carlisle Indian School in 1880 to attempt to completely

assimilate Indians into white culture, or the 50,000 lobotomies performed during the 1930s as a medically "safe" way to subdue those who were out of control. "It makes you think," Finley says, "Who is responsible for these mistakes? Where can you claim responsibility, and where can you abdicate responsibility?"

In 1989, she received a Fulbright Fellowship to live for a year in Yugoslavia, where she worked for TV Belgrade, directing *T.V. Gallery*, a monthly cultural program. Finley describes the decade-old program produced by Dunja Blazevic as "remarkable." "It was perhaps the first international program," she explains, "to actually commission visual artists to create video pieces specifically for television." In addition to documenting artistic events, she created original works for the program. Her work *Which Man Runs, Which Man Sits Still at Home?* (from a quote by Nobel Prize-winning Yugoslav writer and diplomat Ivo Andric),



When do you say "no" to a learned set of values?, asks video artist Jeanne Finley in such works as *So You Want to Be Popular*.

Courtesy Video Data Bank

specifically when you try to share it through the media—that you often get lambasted by it." Responding to one critic's charge of racism, Finley argues, "It didn't matter that it was in a tortilla. Jesus sightings occur in a variety of objects and cultural settings. It mattered about the vulnerability of our humanity and the challenge to remain open, yet also to protect yourself."

Finley's work has been internationally exhibited, including shows at the Museum of Modern Art in New York and its namesake in San Francisco, the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston, and the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris. Her videos have been telecast throughout North America, Europe, and Japan. With a background



Finley directed a monthly cultural program and produced videos including *Which Man Runs, Which Man Sits Still at Home?* while working at TV Belgrade.

Courtesy videomaker



which premiered in February at MoMA, was actually a segment from *T.V. Gallery*. Due to be completed in May is a compilation piece she calls *Training of a Fragile Memory*, which builds on the original Belgrade broadcasts.

"I would have to say my time in Yugoslavia completely changed my perspective," Finley remarks. "No one has failed to comment on how radically different this new work is from what I have done before." While forcing her to rely less on work which was "always heavily language-based," Finley says living in Yugoslavia during a year when "everything opened up" also had a profound effect on her ideological perspective. "If there was any influence," she reflects, "it was to become ever more suspect of the prevailing ideology. Watching people who have lived under the force of these various ideologies deciding how to take a stand was something that made me look very differently at the aesthetic ideological platform that is very strong within our own community here as film, video, and photography artists."

The experience solidified her commitment to take her work to audiences outside the art world. She recently screened several pieces at the Nevada Women's Correctional Institute in Carson City and admits, "I was probably more nervous about going to that screening than any other screening I've ever been to." One of the tapes she screened was *Beyond the Times Foreseen*, which deals with child abuse. "It's about being indoctrinated into this idea of what makes a happy family," she explains. "And so frequently, through no fault of the family itself, or some fault of the family in conjunction with the conditions around it, when you couldn't live up to those expectations, some serious ramifications took place." It was an idea she says many of the women prisoners could closely identify with.

While working at the prison, she became intrigued by a 22-year-old woman serving two life sentences who was assigned to be her assistant. "She's been in prison for seven years for murdering her mother," says Finley. "I think that many, many girls in America share some aspects of what she went through. Her story is an example of how the tragedy of child abuse can manifest itself." Finley's continued research into the case may become a future video project. She describes her work as radically feminist without being didactic. "I'm not going to tell my audience, 'This is the

way this issue should be perceived, this is the way you should believe,'" she insists.

In spite of her desire to reach untapped audiences, Finley still considers the Bay Area "one of the best places for video exhibition," comparable to New York City. "Here, there is a real sense of activity and community support for the work," she notes. "Per capita, there are more nonprofit arenas for exhibition. You have a number of places just in San Francisco that show video, such as the Cinematheque and New American Makers, and a number of galleries—such as Camerawork, the Lab, and New Langton Arts—that show video as well as installations and other kinds of work. You even have some of the private galleries, like Artspace, and public galleries, like the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, that show a lot of video." The work of video artists remains highly visible to the general public, she says, through regular reviews in local arts publications and daily newspapers.

Having recently moved from working as an "itinerant academic" to a full-time job as associate dean of Fine Arts at the California College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland, Finley must eke out time to devote to her next project: a feature-length, experimental video documentary focusing on refugees. "I want to concentrate on approximately five different stories," she says, adding that "the definition of refugee will be broad," and may include "the idea of the prisoner as refugee."

With governmental funding sources drying up, she realizes that her greatest challenge may lie in finding creative ways of garnering financial support from the private sector. "Given the work that I've produced so far, being as quirky as it is," she muses, "it's hard to use that as representative material for some more traditional funding sources." But what remains important to Finley is continuing to produce work she hopes "touches people and moves people, as well as makes people think and challenges their assumptions."

Janice Drickey is a freelance writer in northern California.

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# Plugged In Producers

## A Guide to Working with Cable Networks

LARRY JAFFEE

**“WE** WERE GIVEN A BUDGET THAT WE WOULD HAVE NEVER HAD IF WE were to work on this project independently. We were able to pay the camera crew, everybody their rate, rather than having them work as freebies and defer their pay,” recalls filmmaker Rob Epstein, speaking of his experience with Home Box Office, the pay-cable network that financed, produced, and televised to 17 million subscribers Epstein’s Academy Award-winning documentary *Common Threads: Stories from the Quilt*.

Over the past few years at least half a dozen satellite-delivered national cable networks have become more receptive to funding and developing independent projects, as they have shifted toward a preference for original programming over off-network series and reruns in order to differentiate themselves from their commercial broadcast counterparts. In response, more and more independents are giving up a degree of creative control and final cut in order to work with these networks. In exchange, the producers get larger budgets and audiences, as well as the opportunity to carry out projects that might otherwise languish unfunded. Furthermore, at a time of fiscal crisis for the arts, cable networks are providing independents, especially public documentarians, with a welcome funding and distribution alternative to public television and the media arts center circuit.

### HBO

Filmmaker Bill Couturie has proven that it’s possible to be true to his own vision and work with a corporate entity like HBO. During their decade-long relationship, Couturie has produced numerous films for the pay network, including *Dear America: Letters Home from Vietnam* and *Common Threads*, which he coproduced with Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman.

*Dear America* came about following the release of Sylvester Stallone’s *Rambo*. “HBO wanted me to do a war-heroes-from-Vietnam film,” says Couturie, who had previously made *Vietnam Requiem* for ABC in 1982. He turned down the war heroes concept because “that wasn’t the way I saw the war,” Couturie reflects, although he did think it possible to portray soldiers sympathetically within an antiwar context. “[HBO vice president of documentary development] Cis Wilson called every week for a year. One day in a bookstore I found a book called *Dear America*. I thought to myself, ‘Here is a way to tell the story that hasn’t been done before.’”

Couturie envisioned well-known actors like Robert DeNiro reading the soldiers’ letters to family and friends, coupled with war footage and music by the Rolling Stones, the Doors, and Bruce Springsteen. HBO was reticent. “I said, at least let us write a script.” After Couturie and cowriter Richard Dewhurst finished a script, HBO agreed to front some money, and the pieces started falling into place. Springsteen gave permission to use *Born in the USA*, and DeNiro, Kathleen Turner, Michael J. Fox, and many other stars came into the fold. “HBO gave money to start the movie, but not enough to make it,” Couturie recalls. But HBO chairman Michael Fuchs liked what he saw of the initial rushes, and funding was provided to finish the film, which aired in 1988.

In retrospect, Couturie says he would never do a piecemeal deal like that again, but is glad he did. Besides winning two Emmys and raising \$2-

million for Vietnam veteran organizations, the film was syndicated this past Memorial Day by Warner Brothers to 95 percent of the country on independent television stations. Plus, HBO was so pleased with *Dear America* that the network wanted to know whether Couturie had “any more of these things up his sleeve.”

It was around the same time that Couturie’s wife brought the memorial quilt to his attention. “I agreed that the quilt was the perfect metaphor about AIDS” and a good film subject, he recalls, but Couturie was too busy with another project to produce and direct a film on the quilt. He was about to suggest to HBO that Rob Epstein (*The Times of Harvey Milk*, coproduced with Richard Schmiechen) and his partner Jeffrey Friedman undertake such a film. But he soon discovered that they had already taken steps in this direction and had contacted the Names Project, the nonprofit group that created, organized, and tours the memorial quilt.

The three filmmakers subsequently decided to collaborate and approached HBO with the idea for *Common Threads: Stories from the Quilt* in early 1989. “At first, HBO wasn’t sure about the quilt project,” recalls Epstein. But given Couturie’s track record and Epstein’s coproducer credit on *The Times of Harvey Milk*, HBO eventually gave the trio funding to research and develop the idea.

HBO’s start-up money covered the initial filming of the unfurling of the massive, football field-length quilt. Each panel in the quilt commemorates an individual who died of an AIDS-related illness. After the producers had this footage in hand, “We gave them a 50 page treatment and produced a sample reel. That sold them on the project,” Epstein believes. About six months after HBO was first approached with the idea, the network gave the filmmakers production approval and agreed to underwrite the entire project.

Reflecting on the nature of his collaborations with HBO, Couturie recalls, “In *Dear America*, they made me lose two or three shots.” But in light of the antiwar statement HBO was making by showing the film, he adds, “I considered those changes very inconsequential.” In *Common Threads* there were many more changes requested, but Couturie never felt they were being forced upon him. “[HBO was] always trying to make the film better. Of course, there’s a certain amount of give and take. A television network always has final cut. But, if they have to revert to that, there was a failure to communicate,” believes Couturie, who has two new HBO projects in the planning stages. One is *New World*, a feature-length documentary on “the history of America told from the point of view of the environment.” The second, *Favorite Film*, is a series in which movie stars and directors talk about the films that made the biggest impressions on their lives. Produced in association with the American Film Institute, the series pilot features Martin Scorsese.

“I’ve had a decade dealing with Cis Wilson,” Couturie notes. In Wilson and HBO he has found “a production executive and a network that supports and protects me.” Says Epstein, “Cis Wilson understood the [*Common Threads*] project and always had great ideas. She continually fought for the project,” which finally ran on the pay network in October 1989. Another benefit of working with HBO turned out to be the network’s home video label, which released *Common Threads* in a separate deal that gave all royalties to the Names Project.

Other independents are also finding that working with cable networks has its fringe benefits. HBO picked up the cost of extra prints for *The Best*





HBO has a considerable track record of working with independent producers such as Bill Couturie, whose *Dear America: Letters Home from Vietnam* was funded by the cable network.

Courtesy HBO

explains. Since 1978, HBO has made and shown 140 documentaries, most of which were presented as part of the *Undercover America* series. "There's no boilerplate. Budgets range in size from A to Z," says Nevins. "Some projects can be done on tape. Others require little location shooting and rely mostly on stock footage. Others involve extensive travel and cofinancing." While most of the films run an hour, they can also be 27 or 85 minutes. "Some films have been cast or used animation or reenactment. There's no blueprint for the form or look of an HBO documentary," explains Nevins.

What HBO does require is that the project be "a high profile, high gloss concept. This isn't a film festival for students," she cautions. General areas of interest include crime, economics, profiles, and history. "Ninety percent of the ideas we develop, we wind up doing. But keep in mind we're exposed to 30 ideas a week that don't get developed." Nevins emphasizes that HBO is open to outside ideas. "We screen every tape that comes in, though maybe not the whole thing." She adds, "No one does not get a response," noting it might come as a form letter. But independents hopeful of an HBO deal had better do their homework, since Nevins bristles when a producer displays total ignorance of HBO and its programming. One such aspirant openly admitted to Nevins, "Frankly, I don't get HBO." The HBO executive finds such admissions "imponderable." Among the criteria

HBO uses to decide which outside projects to produce are "who the person is, what's the angle, and his or her experience." Nevins notes that HBO has taken chances on first-time directors, but the circumstances must be extraordinary.

Independent Jon Alpert received a call from HBO after NBC withdrew support in the mid-1980s for his film *Life of Crime*, in which he and his camera crew follow three professional shoplifters on their rounds. The project began as a series of segments for NBC's *Today* show, but it soon became apparent to Alpert that the footage would work better as a feature-length documentary, which didn't interest NBC. Enter HBO, which acquired the completed film for "a fair price," according to Alpert, and telecast it in 1989. "I was extremely satisfied with their professionalism," he adds.

Alpert's relationship with HBO continued when then network executive Dalton Delan asked Alpert's associate Maryann DeLeo to work on a project about rape. Delan says he chose Alpert and DeLeo "because they're great. There are few documentarians as skilled in verité as they are." He adds, "It made a lot of sense for Maryann to take the lead on this project, because she is a woman." (Delan recently moved over to the Lifetime cable network as director of program development, where he is talking to several independent documentarians about specials and public service programs similar to *Rape USA*.) DeLeo recalls, "When they first brought it up, I didn't want to go near it, because it's such a painful subject." After doing some research, DeLeo

*Hotel on Skid Row*, says Renee Tajima, who produced the documentary with Christine Choy and Peter Davis for the cable network last year. "It was clear we were hired hands, freelance workers hired to make the program for HBO," recalls Tajima. But, she insists, not having final cut and complete creative control were not problems. "We have our own projects [that satisfy those inclinations]," she notes.

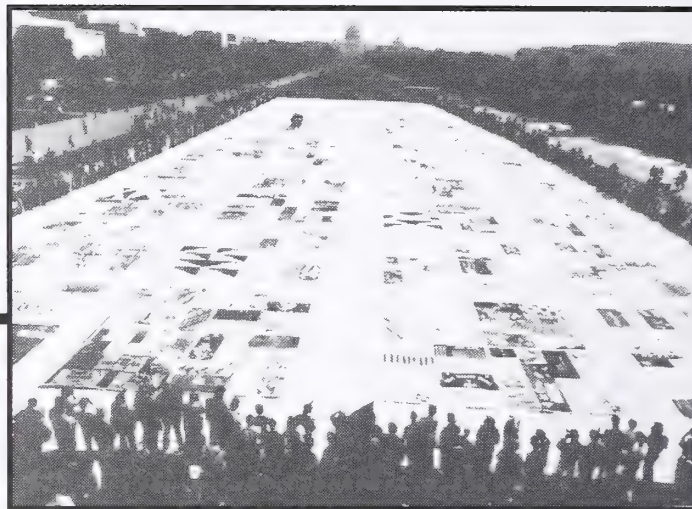
*Best Hotel* originated with HBO chair Michael Fuchs' desire to commission a film about poverty. Sheila Nevins, HBO's vice president in charge of original programming, documentaries, and family programming, had been impressed with Tajima and Choy's *Who Killed Vincent Chin?*, which she had seen at a New Directors/New Films screening at the Museum of Modern Art. Nevins contacted the filmmakers about doing the project as part of HBO's *Undercover America*, an annual series of eight documentary films. While HBO had final cut, Choy and Tajima undertook the project with the understanding that it would be a collaboration with HBO executives. The relationship, Tajima explains, was one where "we sit down, we fight, we discuss, we throw things out. [HBO] knows how to work with filmmakers. If you want to develop a good relationship, there's a degree of professional respect. If we weren't happy, we'd take our names off it." Although Tajima says she might have done some things slightly differently, she concludes, "Basically, I'm satisfied."

"We're always looking for producers, independent or otherwise," Nevins



Right: Couturie's positive experience on *Dear America* helped pave the way for HBO's full funding of *Common Threads: Stories from the Quilt*, by Couturie, Rob Epstein, and Jeffrey Friedman.

Courtesy Direct Cinema



came around to the idea. "I felt really strongly that it was an important subject and told HBO that I would go ahead with it even if HBO decided to forget it."

The resulting film by DeLeo and Alpert, whose working title is *Rape USA: Cries from the Heartland*, will air on HBO this summer. The piece will include eight to 10 case studies and run approximately 50 minutes. Alpert comments, "They gave us a budget, better than what we had for *Life of Crime*. We collaborated [with HBO]. It was really fruitful and productive, financially and creatively." Alpert's Downtown Community Television is under contract with HBO to make three to five more documentaries. Such a relationship, Alpert points out, is critically important for him because he believes he's been "frozen out of commercial television and blacklisted by PBS."

Actress-turned-director Lee Grant agrees with Epstein, Tajima, Alpert, and DeLeo about HBO's adeptness at dealing with independent producers. Grant has produced four documentaries for HBO over the past eight years—*When Women Kill*; *What Sex Am I?*; *Down and Out in America*, winner of an Academy Award in 1987 for best documentary; and *Battered*—and is working on a fifth through her husband's company, Joseph Feury Productions. Grant is now researching *Divorce Wars*, which she has been commissioned to direct, narrate, and cowrite.

Grant embarked on a filmmaking career 12 years ago, but found that nobody in Hollywood would give her a shot at directing. "We came to New York because we couldn't do anything in California," recalls Feury. Grant elaborates, "Our documentary relationship with HBO began after the door was shut. There were no women directing in Hollywood." Before approaching HBO, Grant demonstrated her capabilities as a director with the documentary *The Wilmar 8*, on eight women who went on strike at a Minnesota bank.

HBO came up with the ideas for *When Women Kill* and *Battered*, commissioning Grant to develop, produce, and direct the projects, while Grant and Feury initiated *What Sex Am I?* and *Down and Out in America*. Feury points out that HBO tried to get the couple to produce *Battered* for a long time, but "we wouldn't do it until Lee felt comfortable with domestic violence as a subject." Without getting specific about the budgets, Feury notes that with each film, "HBO gave us more money."

Comparing HBO to Hollywood and the big three television networks, for which she occasionally produces, directs, and acts, Grant says, "It's all the difference in the world. At HBO, it's real and simple. You bring your idea to Sheila Nevins. She says yes or no. It's not like when you try to get something on the networks and it dies in red tape; you have to see a series of people before you get anywhere."

## THE DISCOVERY CHANNEL

"We're clearly always looking for producers with ideas," says Timothy Cowling, executive producer of Discovery Productions. Discovery Productions is a subsidiary of the Discovery Channel, a network that programs only documentaries and is available to more than 50 million homes with basic cable service. "We commission everything. We don't produce anything here in-house. We like to see individuals bring us an idea and have the ability to execute it."

The budgets for Discovery's commissioned hour-long films generally



Left: Chris Choy and Renee Tajima's *The Best Hotel on Skid Row* was commissioned as part of HBO's documentary series *Undercover America*.

Courtesy HBO

Below: When actress Lee Grant wanted to try her hand at directing, she found only closed doors in Hollywood. HBO took a chance, however, and Grant has gone on to produce five documentaries for the network, including *Down and Out in America*.

Courtesy HBO





run \$400,000 to \$600,000. The total production budget this year has increased about 40 percent over last year's amount. While Discovery retains creative control, "We let producers produce," says Cowling. "I'm hardly ever in the field. However, I do look at rough cuts and fine cuts."

One recent example of a Discovery-commissioned independent documentary is *Citizen Carter*, by Chris Koch, about the former President's post-White House years. Koch was also commissioned to be the series producer of Discovery's *Invention*, a \$1.6-million coproduction with the Smithsonian Institute, entirely financed by Discovery. A number of independent filmmakers, chosen by Koch, have contributed segments to the series' 13 half-

hour shows, including St. Clair Bourne, Jonathan Ward, Susan Koch, Ray Farkas, and the Beyond International group of Australia. The Smithsonian provides editorial support and research. "We work together on story development," says Cowling.

This year and next, Discovery is focusing on the environment with a series called *Global Relief* and is seeking suitable documentaries. Films already commissioned include two by independent producer Al Giddins: *In Celebration of Trees* and a second on the condition of the world's oceans as seen by whales. Two years ago, the network commissioned an hour-long documentary by Michael Tobias called *Black Tide*, about the Exxon oil

## The Learning Channel

Any discussion about the relationship between independent producers and cable networks would be remiss without mentioning the Learning Channel's long-running acquisition series *The Independents*. This year *The Independents* will complete its eleventh and twelfth series,

bringing the total number of independent works showcased to over 300 programs. The series, with its thematic seasons and high-profile hosts like Glenn Close, Martin Sheen, and Paul Mazursky, has been TLC's flagship series, standing out from the educationally-oriented service's usual fare of how-to shows and instructional programs. With the Learning Channel's imminent change in ownership, this significant independent acquisition series may stand to benefit.

In February, the Discovery Channel struck an agreement to buy TLC from Infotechnology, the parent firm of the Financial News Network (whose sale is being reviewed by a bankruptcy court). Industry observers speculate that the Discovery Channel might pluck the plum from TLC and reposition *The Independents* on the Discovery Channel. Timothy Cowling, executive producer of Discovery Productions, TDC's production arm, comments he "loves" the series and would like to have it on TDC. "It's eccentric, pure television," he adds.

An eventual takeover of TLC shouldn't have any negative effect on *The Independents*, according to TLC president Rob Shuman, who also serves as the executive producer of *The Independents*. "We're hoping to have [funding for] three new series," says Shuman, adding that he's had "good discussions" with the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the largest underwriter of the series, which is also supported by the National Endowment for the Arts. "[The foundation] understands the breadth and depth of the project and is quite proud of what we've done."

Shuman says he wouldn't have a problem with *The Independents* moving to the Discovery Channel, a network that programs only nonfiction films, if the new ownership decides to go this route. "Discovery is in 55 million homes; we're in 20 million. [Added distribution] will benefit the independent community," he notes, but points out there haven't been any official discussions with TDC executives about such a move.



The Learning Channel's *The Independents* series has showcased over 300 works, including Mira Nair's *So Far from India*, a documentary about a family struggling to live in New York City while maintaining ties to relatives in India.

Courtesy the Learning Channel

TLC would also like to obtain home video and international rights for works that had been included in *The Independents*. Producers, who are now paid \$300 per minute, will be compensated accordingly, assures Shuman. "The Learning Channel has a reputation for cutting fair deals with producers," he asserts. Most likely the producers will be paid based on a yet-to-be-determined percentage of the gross proceeds from home video and international sales. TLC would like to test the concept on several producers with whom the network has worked closely in the past and who still have not sold foreign or home video rights.

Typically, a season of *The Independents* consists of 30 to 35 individual films and tapes in the 13 episodes. In putting together a package from past series for international sale, Shuman hopes to retain a thematic cohesiveness. Several *Independents* series, such as one on aging (*It's About Time*) and another on immigrants (*New to America*), "transcend any and all borders" and would be of interest to audiences in other countries, Shuman believes.



**Bill Plympton is among those animators who have sold work to or created station IDs and program bumpers for MTV and Nickelodeon.**

Courtesy filmmaker

tanker accident in Alaska. The film, telecast on the accident's first anniversary, "was an unflinching look at who's to blame for the accident," comments Greg Moyer, senior vice president of programming at Discovery.

## TNT, USA NETWORK, AND SHOWTIME

For filmmakers looking to break out of the low-budget film mold, especially those with Hollywood inclinations, cable networks like Turner Network Television and USA Network are expressing a willingness to listen to ideas for dramatic films. Gerry Clark, TNT vice president of program development, admits that none of its two-a-month original movies since 1988 have been made by independent producers. However, he adds, that doesn't mean it won't happen. "We've entertained a lot of pitches. We just haven't found the right project from the right director," says Clark.

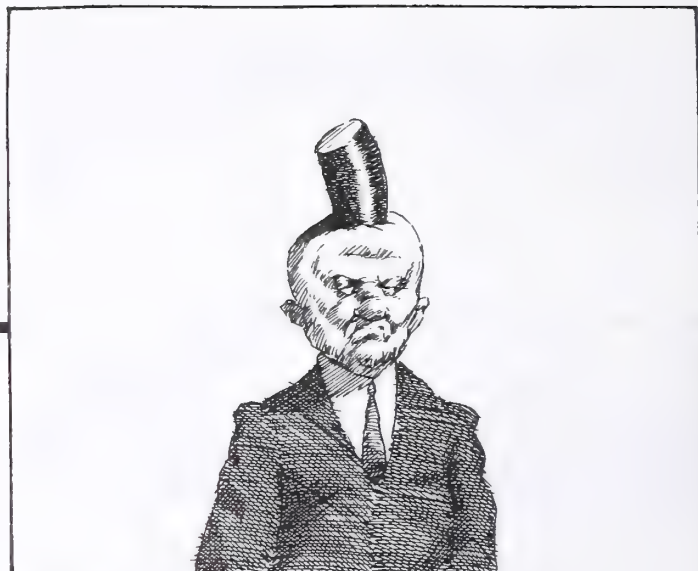
"That doesn't mean we've given up. My job is to develop and supervise the production of original movies. People come to us. Sometimes they're attached to production companies, and sometimes they're independent. The doors are basically open. The proof is, can they execute a film?" A positive trait of independents, according to Clark, is that they're used to working with limited resources and within the constraints of a budget. TNT's original movies usually have budgets of \$3.5- to \$4-million—a level that, for many low-budget independent producers, may seem far from "limited."

When Clark worked at one of the Big Three commercial networks, his department used an unofficial list of acceptable outside producers. "The broadcast networks tend to work with the same limited players. We don't have a list. That's not to say there aren't people we've worked with and want to work with again. But we're open to new people," explains Clark.

Unlike HBO, the TNT development staff does look at student films for new ideas and talent. The network doesn't just look at a credit sheet, says Clark, pointing to the case of Kevin Hooks, who was chosen by TNT to direct *Heatwave*, a film about the 1960s Watts race riots, despite Hook's scant directing experience. The network felt he was perfect for the film because of his understanding of the subject matter and approach to the idea. "Being an African American, Kevin brought things to the project that a non-African American cannot," says Clark. He also notes that before any idea is put into development, it must first be approved by Ted Turner, chair of Turner Broadcasting System, TNT's parent company. He adds that Turner usually approves two of every three projects recommended by the development staff.

USA Network, which is owned by MCA and Paramount, gets the bulk of its films from these Hollywood studios. But it, too, is starting to increase the number of original productions in its schedule. By the end of 1991, USA will have commissioned 10 films from larger independent production companies, such as the Alan Landsburg Company, which produced the upcoming *Diamond Fleece*. Dave Kenin, the network's executive vice president of programming, notes that its movies are always "mystery, suspense dramas" with budgets of \$2.5-million. Finished scripts often find their way to his office, and, like TNT's Clark, Kenin professes an openness to projects from all levels of independent producers, including those from the low-budget end of the field.

Showtime is the second largest pay network, reaching seven million cable subscribers. It helps underwrite and telecasts films produced through the Discovery Program [unrelated to the Discovery Channel], a project of



Plymptoons

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Chanticleer Films.\* Since March 1990, Showtime has provided a showcase for these works on *The Showtime 30-Minute Movie*, hosted by Rob Reiner. The Discovery Program offers industry professionals the opportunity to direct their first film short. Created in 1987 by producers Joseph Sanger (*The Elephant Man*, *Frances*) and Jana Sue Memel (*Tough Guys*), the program relies heavily on sponsors, ranging from major corporations to film labs and studios to food companies. Occasionally, famous actors and skilled production personnel donate their services for the lowest rates permitted by their respective guilds. To date, 29 films have been produced, including Bryan Gordan's *Ray's Male Heterosexual Dance Hall*, which won an Academy Award in 1987, and Jonathan Heap's *12:01*, nominated for an Oscar this year.

## MTV

Independent animators also report generally good relationships working with cable networks. New York animator Bill Plympton has sold 20 to 30 of his Plympton sight gags to MTV over the past two or three years. The 10-second nonverbal bits, with titles like *How to Kiss* and *25 Ways to Quit Smoking*, are actually excerpts from his long-form animated films. "They're weird, bizarre filler, perfect for the MTV audience," says Plympton, whose humor runs along the lines of *The Far Side* comic strip. Every time he finishes a film, he looks for segments to cut out and sell. A recent excerpt, *The Wise Man*, ran three-and-a-half minutes. Plympton is now working on a feature-length animated musical which will feature an original score composed and performed by studio musicians. "I'm able to finance my feature through MTV," which pays him about \$100 a second, Plympton says. He has also created station IDs and an animated environmental film for MTV.

Animator George Griffin, of New York-based Metropolis Graphics, has also done work for MTV. He points out that the network's continuous, changing series of computer-generated logos, which have been done by different animators for the past 10 years, has expanded "the whole notion of what animation is—more than cartoons." He notes, "They've been most open to experimentation. That's pretty good money for independent animators." Griffin has also produced a station ID for another cable network, the Comedy Channel. In addition, MTV's sister network Nickelodeon, which is devoted to children's television, regularly commissions animators to create IDs, program bumpers, and, on occasion, half-hour pilots and programs.

Cable television networks also can provide a forum for programming that its broadcast counterparts may deem inappropriate or too explosive. For example, MTV commissioned the independent production company

\* See "The Discovery Program's Progeny," *The Independent*, July 1988.



Globalvision to produce reports about the Persian Gulf War and its aftermath for the network's *MTV News* program. One report included Jon Alpert's exclusive footage from Iraq showing the damage inflicted by Allied bombing raids on the country and its people. This material had been shot for NBC, which was a regular outlet for Alpert's freelance war reports. Fearing controversy, however, the network refused to air the footage.\* Its subsequent appearance on MTV was the only national telecast of these frontline reports.

Globalvision also found several niches on cable for its controversial news magazine series *South Africa Now*. The four-year-old series, which Globalvision stopped producing after April 24 because of lack of funding, was carried primarily by public television stations. However two major stations came close to cancelling the program last fall when station managers cited doubts about its journalistic integrity and an alleged bias toward the African National Congress.\*\* Neither *CNN World Report*, with which *South Africa Now* traded news segments, nor its other cable outlets expressed similar concerns. The program was also carried by the Vision Interfaith Network, a religious channel, as well as individual cable systems in Los Angeles, Oakland, Boston, and Cambridge, reports executive producer Danny Schechter. "Public television is an inhospitable environment right now," he says, adding that PBS passed on Globalvision's documentary *Mandela in America*. It was picked up by VH-1, owned by MTV Networks, which will telecast a half-hour version on June 2. "We'd like to see our work on other cable outlets," says Schechter, but he is still hoping that PBS will back a new series from Globalvision this fall called *Rights and Wrongs*, about global human rights issues.

## BRAVO

Other cable networks are also getting into the independent act. Bravo, which reaches more than five million cable subscribers, will begin funding independent films—mostly documentaries—in 1992, reports Jonathan Sehring, Bravo vice president of programming. "We always get treatments. We're seriously looking at one or two now that will go into production within the next three to six months," he says. These may include a new Jonathan Demme documentary on Haiti, now being discussed. Although the network hasn't yet officially commissioned any work, Sehring notes it already has strong ties to the independent community, indicating that half the films acquired are independent productions. Although many are, in fact, European art features, US filmmakers have appeared on the line-up, including Spike Lee (*She's Gotta Have It*), Jim Jarmusch (*Stranger Than Paradise*), Mira Nair (*Salaam Bombay!*), Aviva Kempner and Josh Waletzky (*The Partisans of Vilna*), and Kevin and Pierce Rafferty and Jayne Loader (*Atomic Cafe*). Plus, this year the network telecast *The Tenth Annual Independent Spirit Awards*, given by the Independent Features Project/West. This was the first time the awards have been featured in a television special. And starting in July, Bravo will program a weekly showcase of US independent works that do not have theatrical distribution. The network is planning promotion tie-ins with radio stations and arts organizations in local markets.

\* See "Network Nixes Freelance Footage," *The Independent*, May 1991.

\*\* See "South Africa Now Almost Axed," *The Independent*, March 1991.

Independent filmmaker Pam Yates, who currently is talking with HBO about a project, is glad to see cable networks emerging as an alternative to public television, which has shrinking production funds for independent producers and few national showcases for such work. "If there were more competition for product and outlets, it would invigorate the documentary category," she says. Yates also admits, "It would be great to take a salary as a producer," adding that she's willing to try giving up "certain things like final cut and total control" in exchange for a fully-funded HBO project she believes in.

*Larry Jaffee is a freelance writer in New York who has covered the cable industry for Multichannel News, CableVision, and other publications.*

## Cable Network Contacts

### Bravo

150 Crossways Park West  
Woodbury, NY 11797  
(516) 364-2222  
Attn: Jonathan Sehring,  
vice president of  
programming

### The Discovery Channel

7700 Wisconsin Avenue  
Bethesda, MD 20814  
(301) 986-1999  
Attn: Timothy Cowling,  
executive producer

### Home Box Office

1100 Avenue of the Americas  
New York, NY 10036  
(212) 512-1000  
Attn: Sheila Nevins,  
vice president of documentary  
and family programming.

### The Learning Channel

1525 Wilson Boulevard  
Suite 550  
Rosslyn, VA 22209  
(703) 276-0881  
Attn: Robert Shuman,  
president

### Lifetime

36-12 35th Avenue  
Astoria, NY 11106  
(718) 482-4060  
Attn: Dalton Delan,  
director of program  
development

### MTV/VH-1/Nickelodeon

1515 Broadway  
New York, NY 10036  
(212) 258-8000

### Showtime

1633 Broadway  
New York, NY 10019  
(212) 708-1600  
Attn: Steven Hewitt,  
senior vice president, original  
programming and production

### Turner Network Television

1875 Century Park East  
Los Angeles, CA 90067  
(213) 552-4617  
Attn: Gerry Clark,  
vice president of development

### USA Network

1230 Avenue of the Americas  
New York, NY 10020  
(212) 408-9100  
Attn: Dave Kenin,  
executive vice president of  
programming

# VOX POP

## *The BBC's Community Programme Unit*

FRED JOHNSON

IN JANUARY 1990 I WENT TO LONDON FOR A YEAR TO WORK WITH THE BRITISH Broadcasting Corporation's Community Programme Unit (CPU).<sup>\*</sup> This is a semi-autonomous division within the BBC which gives the general public and independent producers access to BBC broadcast time, staff, and resources. The CPU is similar in principle, if not in practice, to public access production on cable television in the US.

While most US independents tend to think of Channel Four as the United Kingdom's sole broadcast outlet for work by independent producers, the BBC's CPU is another vital component of alternative television. The CPU has been creating access programs at the BBC since 1973 and now produces an average of 30 hours per year. I went to the CPU on a Fulbright fellowship to see how access to a big public service broadcasting system like the BBC was handled—and whether it was even possible to give editorial control to the public. After years of working in the cable access movement in the US, I had my doubts. The idea of access in the US depends so much on there being an abundance of cable channels that it's difficult to imagine access working in a broadcast context with only four channels, as currently exists in the UK.

1990 turned out to be a very interesting time to be in Britain, particularly with regard to media politics. The notion of television as a form of public service, which has long characterized British broadcasting, was in crisis. This long-cherished concept had come under prolonged attack by Margaret Thatcher and her Conservative Party colleagues, who aggressively pushed for a system modelled on commercial television in the US. The BBC, in contrast, is financed by a license fee which is collected by the government from individuals who own or rent television sets. There is no advertising as yet on BBC.

The CPU was expected to be one of the first casualties of British broadcasting's economic and political crises. Public access in Britain, as in the US, depends on a mixture of public funding and government regulation. Both were under attack. The trend in government was toward deregulation, while conservative critics argued against publicly subsidized access production and considered the CPU to be something the BBC could no longer afford as it struggled with budget cuts and the political pressure to commercialize.

The proponents of commercialization always attack public service broadcasting, using the promise of increased diversity of programs as their rationale for moving toward a US model. They never make clear that what they are proposing is a transfer of ownership and control from public to private hands. The flaw in their argument is that no commercial broadcasting system has yet demonstrated that it delivers more diversity. A comparison between television in the US and Britain offers a case in point. Many of the same advocates of commercialization are also calling for increased control of controversial programming. They are in the process of instituting

regulatory changes that accomplish both. Their agenda reveals how privatization and censorship are two sides of the same coin.

In Britain in early 1990 the privatization argument surrounding television was startling in its similarity to commentary on social change in Eastern Europe. All you had to do was substitute "public service broadcasting" for the word "socialism." The argument goes something like this: The ideology of public service broadcasting is exhausted. It is an elitist and self-serving scam to impose the ideology of a few left-wing bureaucrats on an underserved and innocent public, who really crave the diversity of free markets and the

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*The Community Programme Unit is relaxed, egalitarian, and informal—qualities the CPU staff feel are essential to their charge of working with the public. And, they add, these are characteristics not easily found elsewhere in the BBC.*

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vitality of global business. The unspoken words "decadent" and "corrupt" are implied and hover about this kind of analysis like flies. The solution is always privatization.

But exhausted is not a word that aptly describes the BBC Community Programme Unit, nor is decadent. What comes to mind are words like committed, seasoned, and struggling. The unit sits on the backlot of the BBC's rehearsal and scenery block in a gritty part of West London, where light industry and low-income suburban housing intermingle. The rehearsal block is actually on a big traffic island ringed by a four-lane road, which is constantly clogged with cars and trucks belching unregulated diesel fuel. Once you have negotiated the road and made your way to the unit, it is impossible to avoid a sense of siege. But the producers at the CPU got used to that feeling long before they started working on a traffic island.

The unit has been under attack in some way or another since it first emerged from the nether world of late 1960s and early 1970s late night programming. During that period pundits got up and talked in a semi-critical way about the BBC. Big name jazz musicians and other cultural figures filtering through London plugged concerts, books, and other work in a hassle-free environment. Then the democratic spirit of the times managed to penetrate this extremely dense zone of hipness. Experiments in giving voice to the people occurred, which eventually led to then director of programming David Attenborough's backing the idea of public access. He gave access advocates and producers a shot through a series of 10 shows, called *Open Door*, that premiered on April 2, 1973. The siege then began in earnest. The BBC Board of Governors besieged Attenborough, claiming the

<sup>\*</sup> The BBC Community Programme Unit, 35 Wales Farm Road, London W3 6UP, Attn: Jeremy Gibson; 081-576-0502.



producers were a guerrilla unit using the BBC to promote their own left-wing ideology. Critics from the left denounced the project as a plot to make the BBC more legitimate, attacking even those groups who were given access. Almost two decades later, these same criticisms are still in circulation.

The CPU was originally located in an old house not far from the cluster of BBC buildings that dominates West London's Shepards Bush. The house was ostensibly meant to make the general public coming in to work with the unit more comfortable. In fact, the separate building was part of the CPU's struggle for autonomy at the time, in the early to mid-1970s. Their struggle was over issues familiar to all access programmers: control over budget, personnel, work environment, job definitions, and working relationships. These areas are still sites of contention, but for now the Community Programme Unit is winning.

This year's budget is around £2.25-million when you include both above- and below-the-line costs. Although the dollar equivalent is \$4.57-million, this amount equals only about \$2.25-million in spending power within the British economy. Above-the-line costs are real cash costs, while below-the-line is the portion of the BBC's enormous resources set aside for the CPU in an internal accounting system that is arcane, more a matter of allocating personnel and machinery than actual costs. No one in production seems to understand very well how below-the-line costs work.

There are around 30 people on staff at the unit. This includes producers, production assistants, a handful of research and administrative people, and of course the editor—a title that corresponds to executive producer or executive director in the US. This staff is frequently supplemented with independent producers whose duration of employment varies, as well as people rotating through the BBC training system.

The struggles for autonomy have paid off in terms of the work environment. It is relaxed, egalitarian, and informal—qualities the CPU staff feel are essential to their charge of working with the public. And, they add, these are characteristics not easily found elsewhere in the BBC.

## The Programs

The primary way that CPU programming finds its way onto BBC2 is through *Open Space*, a documentary series, or "strand" as it is called in Britain. The strand runs throughout the year in two to three groups of five to eight documentaries in consecutive weeks. *Open Space* documentaries are, with rare exceptions, a half-hour in length, embodying the position or point of view of some person or group on issues relevant to British society. Each *Open Space* receives a production team made up of a producer and an assistant, an average of £25,000, and use of the vast research capabilities of the BBC. Independent producers get involved in two ways. They can either be given access on the basis of their application and point of view, like any other group, or they can be hired to produce a program for one of the groups given access.

*Open Space* regularly includes documentaries expressing the point of view of Britain's many minority groups, raising issues of police abuse of power, gay and lesbian rights, the arms trade, alternative education, proportional representation, and AIDS. Unpopular but effective social programs



Logo from *Video Diaries*, one of the BBC's primetime public access series.

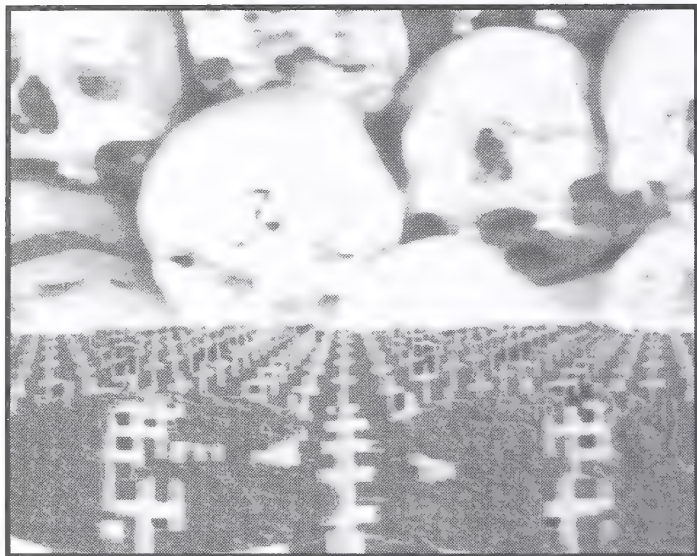
Courtesy British Broadcasting Corporation

Shows such as *Kings Cross*, shown on *Video Diaries*, are created by members of the public who are supplied with basic video training, camcorders, and postproduction assistance.

Courtesy British Broadcasting Corporation

get an airing. For example, the Merseyside Health Authority produced a documentary with independent director Nancy Platt, *Taking Drugs Seriously*, that explained their program of allowing drug users to take drugs in sanctioned ways as a means of controlling and stopping drug abuse and halting the spread of HIV. There are also attempts to deal with issues related





***Death on Delivery*, an *Open Space* program pointing out the dangers of government-sponsored arms trade, was cited as evidence of the BBC's left-wing bias by a prominent member of the House of Lords.**

Courtesy Fred Johnson

to telecommunications, such as *Future on the Line*, a program that looks at the changing telecommunications regulations and grassroots computer applications, which I produced for GreenNet, a grassroots computer coop.

Most of this kind of programming is reportage intercut with direct address testimony and supplemented with narration, but there are no hard and fast rules about style or format. For example, independent producer Sam Berrisford, working with black community groups to expose police violence, used actors to reconstruct court scenes to make up for the lack of police cooperation during the shooting of his program, *Serious Cause for Concern*. Another exception is the occasional one-hour special. With groups advocating relief from Third World debt, unit producer Robin Gouch directed *A Fate Worse than Debt*, a documentary explaining in devastating terms how the Third World is being exploited by the international lending of the multinationals.

Since 1990 the unit has started another strand called *Video Diaries*. It was created by CPU editor Jeremy Gibson to take advantage of the advances in small format recorders to extend the range of television into a more personal style. Selected members of the public receive basic video training and ongoing support from a unit production team, but are left on their own as they gather material with a camcorder. The diarists then receive support from an editing team in postproduction. Programs have included *War, Lives and Videotape*, by photojournalist Nick Danziger, who spent five months with the war-ravaged children of Afghanistan, visiting an eighteenth-century-style mental asylum where orphans are dumped and a Red Cross hospital in Kabul; *Fritz and Jenni*, in which Afrikaner Fritz and his black British wife Jenni move to South Africa and record the problems facing a

mixed race couple; *Promise You Won't Let Them Out on the Streets*, by a physically disabled man named Steve, who records his arrest and its aftermath on behalf of the Campaign for Accessible Transport; and *The Man in the Nylon Stocking*, filmed over eight months by convicted felon Jack, in and outside prison.

### ***The Process***

How does production happen in this environment? It begins with an editorial decision—and that is the tricky part of running a broadcast access operation. Unlike public access in the US, the CPU does not have an entire channel unto itself, nor does it operate on a first-come, first-served basis. The majority of CPU programming appears on BBC2 in a primetime slot between 8 and 9 p.m., with occasional repeats in less desirable hours. BBC2 is a national channel reaching virtually every home in Britain, and there is no shortage of programs lined up to broadcast. This “frequency scarcity,” as it is called in the jargon of communications policy, is the rationale by which BBC employees assume the right to decide what programs get on the air.

The CPU makes these editorial decisions in a two-step process. First the entire CPU staff gathers together with an advisory committee of BBC appointees three to four times a year to consider and vote on proposals submitted by the public. Proposals come in as a result of outreach by the unit or through direct requests from CPU staff. The unit receives an average of 20 proposals a week. The result of this selection meeting is a shortlist of potential programs. The unit editor then selects what will become the next “run” of programs, usually between five to eight shows in a series of consecutive weeks throughout the year. He or she has the option of altering the committee’s list of recommendations in order to create a package that will not be redundant with the program mix on BBC2 and the other three national channels.

The final editorial prerogatives of the unit editor generate no small amount of in-house controversy, but the editor’s power is tempered by the fact that she or he must stay relatively close to the decisions of the selection meeting or the whole process will grind to a halt. The CPU’s work environment is built on high levels of cooperation and founded on the commitment of core staff to the access philosophy. If the editors should withdraw their commitment to the staff, the staff would—and has—withdrawn their cooperation until things get sorted out.

The presence of a programming person making aesthetic and audience decisions brings about an overall schedule that is more responsive and relevant to an audience that has high expectations regarding current affairs coverage than would otherwise be the case. Nowhere is the difference between the CPU’s version of access and the US cable access movement more clear than here. It is important to understand that the First Amendment is more a symptom of democracy than a guarantee, and certainly is no guarantee of diversity on access channels. Rather, diversity requires a social commitment from access workers. It is not uncommon these days to see US access managers unwilling to actively pursue controversial programming or take political responsibility for such shows within their communities. On the other hand, CPU access managers and workers are committed to diversity



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***An Open Space documentary reaches an audience of somewhere between 500,000 and one and a half million viewers. That is a significant audience, which any politically or culturally engaged person or group could use to great advantage.***

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and can afford to be, since they work in a public service broadcasting system that has made a commitment (however modest and limited) to those criteria.

In its selection process, the CPU looks for points of view that are underrepresented or misrepresented in British broadcasting. Also mixed into the criteria is no small amount of show business. It is not perfect, but the programs reflect an incredible range of voices and political positions compared to US broadcasting and slightly exceed the social (but not stylistic) diversity of programming now appearing on US cable access channels.

CPU programming is created by the individuals or groups selected to be given a voice. This happens either by assigning them a unit producer or purchasing a program already made by an outside production team. The groups and organizations selected may or may not have the capability to create programs; there is no restriction one way or the other. There is the necessity of keeping salaried staff at the unit working and that obviously biases decisions about outside purchases, but the unit frequently uses independently produced work in the interest of diversity, which is their editorial charge.

Independents come into the production mix in another significant way. Again in the interest of diversity CPU may contract with an independent producer to work with an access program because she or he is particularly well suited to the project—for reasons of language or cultural background, for example, or because of the producer's track record in working with related issues. This opens the way for independents to work with the unit much more often than would be the case with production groups whose program responsibility did not require diversity.

### ***The Pundits and Politicians***

The criticism in Britain, from both the right and left, of this kind of access programming is identical to the criticism of public access encountered in the US. The main, vague, leftist critique asserts that the media—both public service and commercial—is not a free press providing a diversity of viewpoints which nurture democracy, as it claims to be. Rather, it is a mechanism designed to perpetuate the dominance of the rich and powerful.

Access, or any other attempt to increase diversity in broadcasting, must claim to permanently alter these relationships of dominance—in other words, the structure of media—in order to be legitimate under the gaze of these critics. Anything short of that is seen as a form of cooptation or ghettoization. In Britain, this results in the scolding of those people making efforts to use access. Critics charge that by doing so they are allowing broadcasters to state that the system works, thereby legitimizing their erroneous claims of being a “free press.” Furthermore, the critique goes, by allowing oneself or one's organization to be “accessed,” one is accepting the media's label of marginal.

This kind of thinking denies that in a class society all kinds of people are marginalized. Actively placing their views on a national broadcast or cable access channel makes them less marginalized for a number of reasons, including but not limited to simple communication. An *Open Space* documentary reaches an audience of somewhere between 500,000 and one and a half million viewers. That is a significant audience, which any politically or culturally engaged person or group could use to great advantage. To deny that in order to prove some obvious point is self-defeating.

The first *Open Space* program I worked on is one example of a CPU program putting an unpopular perspective into the public spotlight. *Death on Delivery*, created with the Campaign Against the Arms Trade, articulated the dangers of government-sponsored arms trade in an era of deflating



***Open Space* also runs shows that are clearly not from a left-wing perspective, such as *Flying Fur*, in which the fur industry accuses animal rights activists of racism and ecological destruction.**

Courtesy British Broadcasting Corporation



From *Future on the Line*, an Open Space program about telecommunications and social injustice by the computer communications group GreenNet.

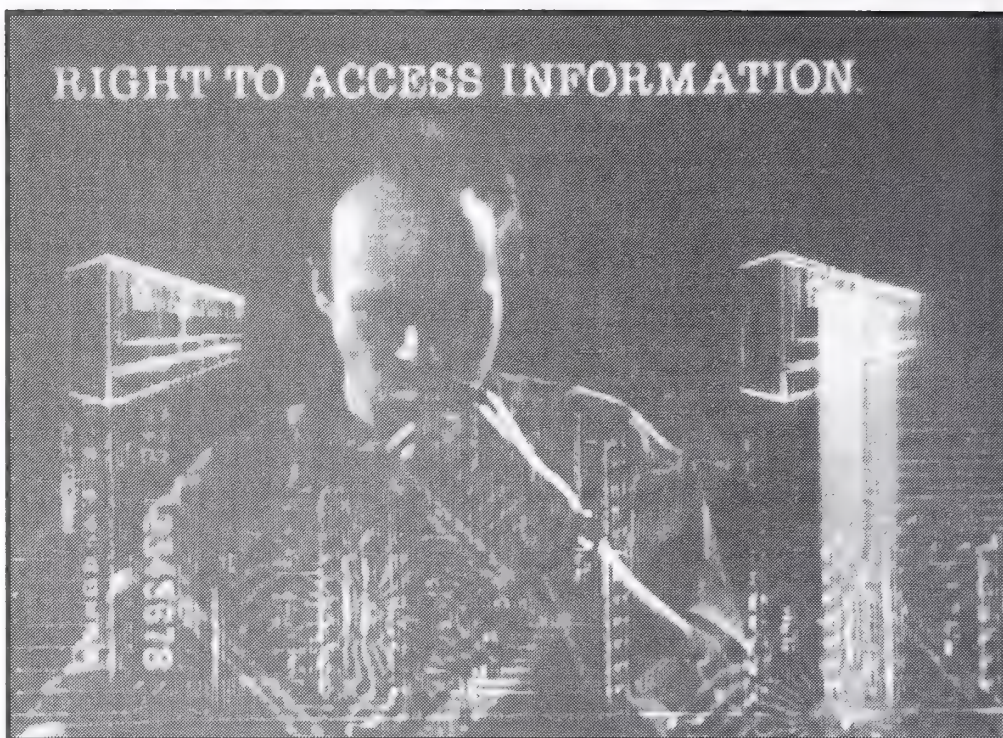
Courtesy Fred Johnson

weapons budgets. Specifically, it pointed out the threat of overdeveloped countries resorting to increased arms sales to developing countries as a means of propping up their defense industries. *Death on Delivery* aired on BBC2 at eight in the evening—certainly not a marginal time—and was competing with the World Cup coverage, much to our frustration. Regardless, between a half million and a million people saw the show, and the Campaign Against the Arms Trade received over 1,500 calls and membership inquiries over the next two days. They subsequently packaged the documentary as an educational and organizing tape; I'm sure they've made good use of it since the onset of the Gulf War.

The case of *Death on Delivery* also reveals how the powers that be view access. After the documentary aired, it was brought to the attention of Lord Orr-Ewing, a member of the House of Lords who chairs an important committee on broadcasting. Orr-Ewing screened a videotape of *Death on Delivery* before his parliamentary committee in the context of their debate on very repressive language on impartiality in the Broadcasting Bill of 1990. The tape was touted as an example of the BBC's left-wing bias—neglecting to mention that it was a program produced by the only unit in the BBC with access responsibilities.

Unlike the faction of left critics of access, Lord Orr-Ewing and the Conservative government take this all very seriously. Their solution is the destruction of all access programming through chilling legislative language demanding a kind of impartiality that makes access programming too costly, and in some cases conceptually impossible. The current language allows broadcasters to achieve "impartiality" over a period of time. Orr-Ewing's proposal requires that "impartiality" be achieved within each program. It is clearly designed to stifle media-makers who are engaged in critical or oppositional projects. This includes access programming, but extends to a large range of programs on social issues. Orr-Ewing's grand solution, of course, is the privatization and destruction of the British system of public service broadcasting.

That agenda is well underway. The Broadcasting Bill became legislation, with a watered down, but still chilling, impartiality clause. The bill also mandates the auctioning of Independent Television (ITV) franchises, thus opening the door further to the international conglomerates controlled by media moguls Murdoch, Maxwell, Berlusconi, and the like. Documentary budgets have been cut throughout British broadcasting as a result of the bill and revenue reductions caused by earlier Thatcherite deregulation. Channel Four must now sell its own advertising rather than receive support through a percentage of ITV ad sales. The Independent Broadcasting Authority was replaced by a regulatory body with much less authority, presumably in the interest of freeing up market forces. As a result of the impartiality language, the rightist Freedom Association is taking Channel Four to court. They are attempting to set a precedent in the interpretation of the new impartiality language that would define it in such a way that it functionally accomplishes everything Lord Orr-Ewing originally intended before the bill was watered down in the legislative process. If successful, this would make



access programs impossible to produce on all levels—financial, administrative, and political.

As for the BBC and the Community Programme Unit, the 1991 Broadcast Bill is one of many factors that make for a precarious position. When Michael Checkland took over as BBC director general a couple of years ago, he answered the question, "What's the future of the BBC?," by replying, "Smaller." With budgets falling and the BBC Charter up for renewal by the government in 1997, nothing is safe, certainly not the CPU. Unit editor Jeremy Gibson says he has no commitment for next year's budget and notes that management is putting on the pressure. For the first time, they are asking CPU to codify editorial policy, which to date has existed as an unwritten agreement between BBC management and the unit. To CPU'S discomfort, these discussions are going on in tandem with budget discussions.

Since the move toward privatization, many estimate that up to one-third of the television industry's workforce has disappeared in the last three years, with no apparent increase in activity in the independent production sector. Deregulation has allowed cheaper forms of programming to pour into Britain from other countries via cable and satellite. The cable industry, which is mostly owned by US telephone and cable companies, can now sell telephone service to homes along with television, thus breaching a long-standing international regulatory taboo.

Even though Britain is not all that culturally distant, it is far enough to allow one to see patterns relevant to the communications debates within the US. For example, advertising supported broadcasting is the most effective de facto form of censorship, and advocates in government of privatization and censorship are generally the same people. Another pattern is that technical changes in distribution, such as the pervasive use of VCRs, cable, and satellite, have precipitated deregulation in television and resulted in a decrease in broadcasters' accountability to the public.

A third obvious pattern is that socially diverse programming requires government regulatory support and some kind of public subsidy in order to survive. This is extremely critical for access programming, which is always targeted early in any discussion about the reduction of government or public support. This is as true for cable access in this country as it is for the privatization of broadcasting in Britain.

*Fred Johnson is a media artist, an activist, and a member of the Media Working Group, a media arts cooperative in the Ohio River Valley.*



## RENEE TAJIMA

Florida-based filmmaker Nancy Yasecko has just completed a new one-hour documentary, **Journey into Wilderness: Florida's Indian River Lagoon**. The film tells the story of explorers and pioneers drawn to a lush, subtropical lagoon, where they meet the unexpectedly harsh demands of that frontier. First-person accounts from journals dating back to the first Spanish explorers are juxtaposed with the visual world and characters of today. In a place that stayed a frontier for more than 400 years, we see that the frontier remains where it always was—at the shifting border between the natural and the constructed world. Major funding for *Journey* was provided by the Florida Endowment for the Humanities, the Florida Arts Council, Harris Corporation, and Southern Bell. *Journey into Wilderness: Florida's Indian River Lagoon*: Nancy Yasecko, 2400 N. Banana River Dr., Merritt Island, FL 32953; (407) 459-2400.

At the turn of the century, Ida B. Wells, newspaper publisher, editor, and pioneer investigative reporter, was a major figure in the struggle for human rights in the US and in the women's suffrage movement. Veteran New York filmmaker William Greaves' 53-minute documentary **Ida B. Wells: A Passion for Justice**, narrated by Al Freeman Jr. with readings by Toni Morrison, tells the remarkable story of Wells, who advocated self-help in the African American community. Wells also served as a leader in the anti-lynching movement and challenged the forces of racism and segregation that were unleashed during the post-Reconstruction period. Wells' ideas and strategies have influenced virtually every subsequent African American leader, from W.E.B. Du Bois and A. Philip Randolph to Malcolm X and Martin Luther King. *Ida B. Wells: A Passion for Justice*: William Greaves Productions, 230 W. 55th St., #26D, New York, NY 10019; (212) 265-6150, (800) 874-8314; fax: (212) 315-0027.

From Austin independents Stephen Mims and Christopher Hammond comes **Aunt Hallie**, a seven-and-a-half minute satirical narrative screened in this year's Museum of Modern Art's New Directors/New Films series. Directed by Mims and written and edited by Hammond, *Aunt*

*Hallie* recounts the story of an older woman whose discovery of a condom on the pristine lawn of her imposing mansion leads her to conclude that the unsavory item has contaminated her lawn with "old nasty disease." Her obsession escalates until she believes that she too has been infected. Hallie goes on to take extreme measures to protect her loved ones from the imaginary affliction, and the antics earn her a distinct place in the memories of her descendants. *Aunt Hallie*: Fanlight Productions, 47 Halifax St., Boston, MA 02130; (617) 524-0980; fax: (617) 524-8838.



William Greaves' new film *Ida B. Wells: A Passion for Justice* tells the story of the pioneering journalist, activist, suffragist, and anti-lynching crusader in her own words, read on camera by author Toni Morrison.

Courtesy filmmaker

Just when the Bush administration thought it was safe to go back out and see a movie, the Empowerment Project is releasing **Invasion in Panama**. This exposé of US foreign policy and the national news media coverage of the invasion is directed by Barbara Trent and produced by Trent, David Kasper, Nico Panigutti, and Joanne

Doroshov. During a month in Panama, the crew taped interviews with president Endara and the commander of US invasion forces, as well as human rights leaders and invasion victims who lost family members and witnessed the burning of their community. Additional footage includes television news reports broadcast during the invasion and interviews with members of Congress, administration officials, policy analysts, and media experts. Segments of the 90-minute documentary focus on the history of US-Panamanian relations, conflicting rationales behind the invasion, the refugee crisis created by the destruction of residential areas, and the civilian death toll. Funding for *Invasion* came from a number of sources, including Rhino Home Video, the J. Roderick MacArthur Foundation, the Rex Foundation, Peace Development Fund, the National Council of Churches, the Funding Exchange/Paul Robeson Fund for Film and Video, the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation, the Vanguard Public Foundation, and filmmaker Michael Moore. The Empowerment Project plans a 16-city theatrical release. *Invasion in Panama*: 1653 18th St., Ste. 3, Santa Monica, CA 90404; (213) 828-8807; fax: (213) 453-4347.

Memory, war, the paradox of assimilation, and ethnicity are the themes of **Some Divine Wind**, New York City filmmaker Roddy Bogawa's first feature. The film features a young man of mixed parentage, whose father was part of a bombing mission that destroyed his Japanese mother's village and her entire family during World War II. Though the father discovers this horrible coincidence when they first meet after the war, he keeps it a secret for love. Their son Ben learns the tragic story 20 years later, and it tears at his bonds with both parents. According to Bogawa, the film's title is a rough translation of kamikaze, the divine wind the Japanese believe to have been sent by God to destroy the invading forces of Ghengis Khan. To Americans, kamikaze are remembered simply as suicide pilots during the war. Both meanings are relevant to the film, being cultural instances of incomprehension, divinity, life, and death. The 72-minute film was screened at the American Film Institute Filmfest. *Some Divine Wind*: Drift Distribution, 83 Warren St., #5, New York, NY 10007; (212) 766-3713.

Two filmmakers ask, "How would you like a medical detective story where you were one of the



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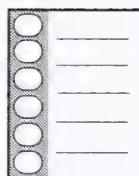
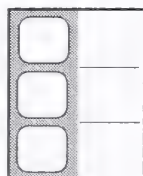
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victims?" The question is asked by Susan Robinson and Jill Boniske, who are collaborating on *A Second Opinion*, the story of Dr. Alice Stewart. Stewart, an 84-year old British scientist and physician, has been a "medical detective" for over 35 years. She preceded the Federal Drug Administration by two decades in warning against prenatal x-rays, and she has compiled one of the largest surveys of statistical evidence on radiation and cancer. Robinson and Boniske's narrative will incorporate classic Agatha Christie-mystery elements to reveal the real dangers behind growing atomic radiation levels in the world around us. The filmmakers have already produced a 10-minute video on Stewart and plan to complete the one-hour film for a 1992 release. *A Second Opinion*: Edward McNally, (404) 297-9977.

The Family, a repertory company composed of former inmates and professional actors, first gained attention for *Short Eyes*, which was proclaimed Best American Play in 1974 and later made into a motion picture. *Dreams Inside and Out*, a new documentary by Sylvie Thouard, documents the making of the original theater production, born from the aftermath of the Attica uprisings and based on inmates' experiences in New York prisons. The 52-minute tape traces the company back to its inception, when Pancho, aka Marvin Felix Camillo, director of the Family, first meets Stanley at the Rikers Island Correctional Facility. There they produce the play *Straight from the Ghetto* with a group of prisoners. Years later they meet again and stage *Dreams* with former inmates. In the world outside Stanley struggles to become a singer, and Pancho tries to find a permanent space to continue the work of the theater. *Dreams Inside and Out* received funding from the New York State Council on the Arts and support from the Media Alliance On-Line Program. It earned a Silver Plaque at the 1990 Chicago International Film Festival. *Dreams Inside and Out*: Sylvie Thouard, 379 West St., #5A, New York, NY 10014; (212) 242-2271.

## ATTENTION AIVF MEMBERS

The **In and Out of Production** column is a regular feature in *The Independent*, designed to give AIVF members an opportunity to keep the organization and others interested in independent media informed about current work. We profile works-in-progress as well as recent releases. These are not critical reviews, but informational descriptions. AIVF members are invited to submit detailed information about their latest film or videotape for inclusion in **In and Out of Production**. Send descriptions and black and white photographs to: *The Independent*, 625 Broadway, 9th floor., New York, NY 10012; attn: In and Out of Production.



## Domestic

**BRECKENRIDGE FESTIVAL OF FILM**, Sept. 11-19, CO. Noncompetitive fest presents new ind. productions to audience of avid moviegoers. About 30 features, shorts, docs, experimental, animated & educational films selected. Premieres, retros & ind. films programmed. Critics Choice Award (by audience) to best film in 3 cats. Held in multi-seasonal resort in Rocky Mtns. Entry fee: \$20; entrants responsible for shipping. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 1/2". Contact: Joanne Van Steenberghe, Breckenridge Festival of Film, Box 718, Breckenridge, CO 80424; (303) 453-6200.

**CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF CHILDREN'S FILMS**, Oct. 11-20, IL. Sponsored by Facets Multimedia, nonprofit multi-arts org. 8th edition of competitive fest programs entertainment films, videos & TV programs. Juries composed of filmmakers, critics, educators, parents, children. Entries must be humanistic, nonexploitative, nonviolent & speak to culturally diverse audiences. Cats: feature-length live action, feature animation, short live action, short animation, video single program, video series, special jury awards. No entry fee. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4"; preview on 3/4" & 1/2". Deadline: July 1 (extended from June 1). Contact: Chicago Int'l Festival of Children's Films, 1517 W. Fullerton Ave., Chicago, IL 60614; (312) 281-9075; fax: (312) 929-5437; telex: 20-6701.

**CINEQUEST**, Oct. 10-13, CA. 2nd yr of noncompetitive fest held in downtown San Jose operates under theme Maverick Filmmakers, highlighting "ground-breaking" US features & shorts. Int'l ind. films also programmed. Film Feast Evenings sponsored by local restaurants w/ discussions after screenings. Announcement of foundation programs to aid US independents in exhibition & distrib. planned during fest. Entry fee: \$20 (no formal entry form required). Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: Aug. 1. Contact: Cinequest, 730 E. Evelyn Ave., Ste. 626, Sunnyvale, CA 94086; (408) 739-6238.

**COLUMBUS INTERNATIONAL FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL**, Oct. 22-24, OH. Now in 39th yr, fest accepts docs in cats of arts/culture, business/industry, media of print, education, health/medicine, religion/ethics, social studies, travel, natural sciences, TV short form. Awards: Chris statuette, Bronze Plaque, Certificate of Honorable Mention, Special awards. Chris Award winners eligible for entry in doc feature cat of Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences. Entries must be completed in previous 2 yrs. Entry fees: \$70-\$350. Formats: 1/2", 16mm. Deadline: July 15. Contact: Joyce Long, Awards Administrator, Columbus Int'l Film & Video Festival, 5701 N. High St., Ste. 204, Worthington, OH 43085; (614) 841-1666.

**LOOKOUT: DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY TELEVISION LESBIAN AND GAY VIDEO FESTIVAL**, Oct. 8, 11-12, NY. Videos in any style that "produce fun, gay-positive imagery & investigate the concerns & diversity of gay & lesbian communities." Fest interested in racial & cultural diversity, esp. tapes by non-western producers. Selected works may be aired on cable or shown in other cities. Fest now in 3rd yr. No entry fee; enclose SASE. Formats: 3/4", 1/2", video 8, hi-8, Pixel. Deadline: Aug. 10. Contact: Jean Carlomusto, DCTV Lesbian & Gay Video Festival, 87 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10013; (212) 966-4510; fax: (212) 219-0248.

**NEW YORK LESBIAN AND GAY EXPERIMENTAL FILM FESTIVAL**, Sept., NY. Now in 5th yr, fest is 1 of largest experimental events in NYC, attracting audiences

**This month's festivals have been compiled by Kathryn Bowser, director of the FIVF Festival Bureau. Listings do not constitute an endorsement. Since some details change faster than we do, we recommend that you contact the festival for further information before sending prints or tapes. In order to improve our reliability and make this column more beneficial to independents, we encourage all film-and videomakers to contact FIVF Festival Bureau with their personal festival experiences, positive and negative.**

over 2,000. Accepts experimental work by lesbian/gay producers or on lesbian/gay subjects. Selected filmmakers paid for participation. Early apps & premieres given priority. Held at Anthology Film Archives. Formats: 16mm, super 8; preview on 3/4" & 1/2". Deadline: July 1. Contact: Jim Hubbard, NY Lesbian & Gay Experimental Film Festival, 503 Broadway, Rm. 503, New York, NY 10012; (212) 925-5883.

## Foreign

**CORK FILM FESTIVAL**, Oct. 6-13, Ireland. Now in 36th yr, fest programs contemporary features, shorts, docs, experimental & animated films, incl. many ind. productions. New section begun last yr showcases contemporary b&w films, w/ awards for best feature, short, cinematography. No entry fee. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preselection on 1/2". Deadline: July 26. Contact: Michael Hannigan, director, Cork International Film Festival, Triskel Arts Centre, Tobin St., Cork, Ireland; tel: (353) 21271711; fax: (353) 21275945.

**IGUALADA INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF AMATEUR CINEMA**, Oct. 11-19, Spain. Nonprofessional works by amateur producers or students on any topic accepted in competition. Cats: argument, fantasy/animation, documentary/report. In addition to Great Award for Best Film (200,000 Ptas. & Gold Medal), fest awards 1st & 2nd prizes in ea. cat, w/ silver & bronze medals & cash prizes of 25,000-30,000 Ptas., special awards. Entries must be under 60 min. Formats: 16mm, super 8. Deadline: July 20. Contact: Film Amateur, Box 378, 08700 Igualada (Barcelona), Spain; tel: 93 804 6907; fax: 93 804 4362; telex: 52038 PBCO E.

**KIJKHUIS WORLD WIDE VIDEO FESTIVAL**, Sept., Netherlands. Now in 10th yr, fest is major exhibition opportunity for ind. video, showing recent int'l work, incl. tapes, installations, performances & other works involving video. Entries selected on basis of contribution to creative use of electronic media. Top award from Municipality of the Hague (\$2500). Sponsored by Kijkhuis media arts center. Last yr 86 productions from

20 countries selected, w/ 25 in competition. Video market held during fest. Formats: 3/4", 1/2", Beta. Deadline: July 15. Contact: Tom Van Vliet, World Wide Video Festival, Noordeinde 140, 2514 GP Den Haag, The Netherlands; tel: 070 3644805; fax: 070 3614448.

**LONDON INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, Nov. 8-24, England. Fest dir. Sheila Whitaker will again work w/ FIVF to collect & ship films & videos for selection in 3rd yr of largest section of US ind. prods in Europe. Last yr large number of US entries shown in context of program of nearly 200 works. London is invitational & non-competitive & this yr celebrates 35th anniversary. Fest particularly interested in children's films for program running prior to fest. New Electronic Images section (which may program entries from US Independent section). Other sections: Panorama (world cinema); UK films; French works; African, Asian & Latin American film; LFF on the Square (mainstream films). Screenings held in various parts of London, incl. Odeon Leicester Square, Warner's Leicester Square Theater, Empire, Metro Cinema, Inst. of Contemporary Cinema. Fest is UK's major film event, attended by large audiences & over 700 media professionals. Entries must be UK premieres. Fiction & doc works of all lengths & genres accepted. Fest formats: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm, super 8, 3/4"; preview on cassette only. Fee: \$15, payable to FIVF. Deadline at FIVF: July 19. For info & appl., send SASE or contact: Kathryn Bowser, Festival Bureau director, FIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th fl., New York, NY 10012; (212) 473-3400. If applying directly to London, deadline is Aug. 10. Fest address: London International Film Festival, South Bank, London SE1 8XT, England; tel: 01 928-3535; fax: 01 633 9323; telex: 929220 NATFIL G.

**MANNHEIM INTERNATIONAL FILMWEEK**, Sept. 30-Oct. 5, Germany. Now in 40th yr, competitive fest is among oldest in Germany. Fest actively seeks artistic discoveries & ind. films. Competition accepts feature film debuts, critical docs, short fiction films, experimental & animated works. New Film in Focus section—public debates w/ renowned philosophers & artists. Awards: Mannheim Film Debut Prize for best feature (25,000DM), Josef von Sternberg Prize for most original film (5000DM), SDR Documentary Film Prize (10,000DM, incl. purchase of broadcast rights by Suddeutscher Rundfunk, Stuttgart). Entries must be German premieres. All participants receive certificates. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette. Deadline: Aug. 15. Contact: Fee Vaillant, Michael Kotz, Collini-Center-Galerie, D-6800 Mannheim 1, Germany; tel: 0621 102943; fax: 0621 291564; telex: 463 423.

**MONTREAL INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF NEW CINEMA AND VIDEO**, Oct. 17-27, Canada. Celebrating 20th yr as important showcase for innovative ind. productions, noncompetitive fest looks for alternative works that creatively depict aspects of human experience. Special awards, sponsored by Laurentian Bank, incl. \$5,000 for best feature, \$1,000 for best short, \$2,000 for best video, Critics Association award. Feature length & short drama, fiction videos & films & docs accepted. Entries must be produced in 21 mo. prior to fest & unscreened in Quebec. Entry fee: \$40 (film & video). Formats: 35mm, 16mm, super 8, 3/4", 1/2", Beta.

Deadline: Aug. 15. Contact: Claude Chamberlan/Dimitri Eipides, Festival International du Nouveau Cinema & de la Video de Montreal, 3726 Boul. St.-Laurent, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2X 2V8; tel: (514) 843-4725; fax: (514) 843-4631.

**MONTREAL WORLD FILM FESTIVAL**, Aug. 22-Sept. 2, Canada. 15th anniv. of only competitive fest in N. America recognized by FIAPF. It "intends to celebrate in high fashion." Fest boasts annual audiences over 280,000 & programs over 250 films in sections incl. Official Competition, Hors Concours (out of competition), Latin American Cinema, Cinema of Today & Tomorrow (new trends), Panorama Canada, TV films. \$C50,000 Prix de Montreals for 1st or 2nd feature. Features & shorts accepted. Special events incl. 10 tributes to "great personalities of contemporary cinema," tribute to Cannes International Critics Week & to 5 Scandinavian countries. Also Int'l Film, TV & Video Market. No entry fee. Formats: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Deadline: July 15. Contact: Serge Losique, Montreal World Film Festival, 1455 Boul. de Maisonneuve W., Montreal, Quebec H3G 1M8, Canada; (514) 848-3883/933-9699; fax: (514) 848-3886; telex: 05-25472.

**SAN SEBASTIAN FILM FESTIVAL**, Sept. 19-28, Spain. Described in *Variety* as queen of Spanish fests, this fest, now in 39th yr & held in Basque region, is largest film event in Spain. Int'l competition & several sidebars & tributes (last yr to African American directors). Sections: Official Competitive Section, awards Golden Conch, Silver Conch, best actor/actress & Special Jury awards; Zabaltegui Open Zone awards \$100,000 to best film by new director; Azoka Commercial Area supplements

Euroaim Screenings. This yr for 1st time competition open to docs. Grand Prize in doc cat will be \$80,000 grant toward winner's next film. Dramatic shorts accepted for exhibition but not official competition. Fest formats: Competition, 35mm; Zabaltegui, 35mm & 16mm. US entries screened by US reps; fest screens 35mm, 16mm & video. Submit tape, synopsis, credits, technical data, reviews. Deadline for prescreening of docs (cassette only): July 1. Contact: Claudine Mulard, San Sebastian Film Festival delegate, 1030 Tiverton Ave., Ste. 425, Los Angeles, CA 90024; (213) 824-0865; fax: (213) 824-7078. Deadline for prescreening of fiction features (over 75 min., cassette only): July 1. Contact: Sandy Mandelberger, Independent Feature Project, 132 W. 21 St., New York, NY 10011; (212) 243-7777; fax: (212) 243-3882. Address in Spain: San Sebastian Film Festival, Box 397, 20080 San Sebastian, Spain; tel: 34 43 481212; fax: 34 43 285979; telex 38145 FCSS E.

**TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL/ FESTIVAL OF FESTIVALS**, Sept. 5-14, Canada. Noncompetitive celebration of film w/ wide-ranging program playing to enthusiastic int'l audiences (incl. large press contingent), fest is major event on circuit, w/ many films receiving world & N. American premieres. Last yr's event slated 215 features from 44 countries & 76 shorts & docs. Cats: Galas (premieres of major new productions), Contemporary World Cinema ("most recent & engaging films" from several countries), Perspective Canada, Edge, Special Presentations, Midnight Madness, National Cinema, Archival Programme, Spotlight. 3-day Trade Forum is industry sidebar held during fest. Fest has reputation for programming innovative, alternative, experimental films.

Entries must be completed after Sept. 1, 1990. Short films must be by Canadian producers. No entry fee. Formats: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: July 12. Contact: Piers Handling, Festival of Festivals, 70 Carlton St., Toronto, Ontario M5B 1L7, Canada; tel: (416) 967-7371; fax: (416) 967-9477; telex: 06 219724.

**VANCOUVER INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, Oct. 4-20, Canada. Growing fest will mark 10th anniv. this yr. Attendance last yr surpassed 77,000; audiences viewed 228 film from over 40 countries. Ind. films are programmed in sections incl. Cinema of the Pacific Rim, Canadian Images, Cinema of the Soviet Union, Cinema of Our Times (incl. US productions). Entries must be British Columbia premieres. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 1/2". Deadline: July 31. Contact: Alan Franey, Vancouver International Film Festival, 788 Beatty St., #303, Vancouver, BC V6B 2M1; (604) 685-0260; fax: (604) 688-8221; telex: 045 08354.

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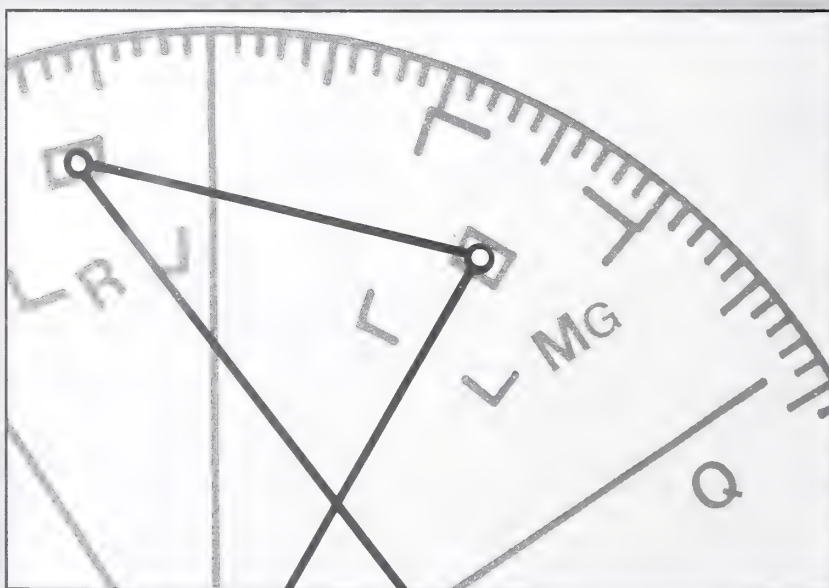
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Membership provides you with a year's subscription to *The Independent*. Published 10 times a year, the magazine is a vital source of information about the independent media field. Each issue helps you get down to business with festival listings, funding deadlines, exhibition venues, and more. Plus, you'll find thought-provoking features, coverage of the field's news, and regular columns on business, technical, and legal matters.

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AIVF works directly with many foreign festivals, in some cases collecting and shipping tapes or prints overseas, in other cases serving as the U.S. host to visiting festival directors who come to view work.

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Members can house copies of their work in the AIVF tape library for screening by visiting festival programmers. Or make your own special screening arrangements with AIVF.

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*continued*

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## Conferences ■ Seminars

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**INTERNATIONAL FILM & TV WORKSHOPS** in Rockport ME: 100 wk-long workshops. Contact: Workshops, 2 Central St., Rockport, ME 04856; (207) 236-8581; fax: (207) 236-2558.

**SOUTHEASTERN MEDIA INSTITUTE:** Hands-on media prod. exp. & aesthetic perspectives in small workshop setting. June 10-23 in Columbia, SC. Reduced rate registration by May 20. Campus housing avail. on 1st-come, 1st-served basis. Contact: Southeastern Media Institute, SCAC Media Arts Center, 1800 Gervais St., Columbia, SC 29201; (803) 734-8696; fax: (803) 734-8526.

**SUNDANCE INSTITUTE** Independent Producers Conference: Intensive weekend dedicated to business of ind. filmmaking, incl. case studies of ind. films & small group problem-solving sessions. July 25-28. Contact: Sundance Institute, Producers Conference, R.R. #3, Box 624-B, Sundance, UT 84604.

**UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII FILM & VIDEO SUMMER INSTITUTE:** 1 & 2-wk workshops/seminars in screenwriting, editing, doc filmmaking, animation, elements of prod. & entertainment law. July 15-Aug. 3, Honolulu. Contact: FAVSI, UH Summer Session, 101 Krauss Hall, 2500 Dole St., Honolulu, HI 96822; (808) 956-7221; fax: (808) 956-3421.

**VISUAL STUDIES WORKSHOP SUMMER INSTITUTE** seminars incl. History of Video Art, June 24-28; Earthscore Method of Video Prod., July 1-5; Writing Media Criticism, July 1-5; Digital & Video Moving Image, July 8-12; Intro to Small Format Video, July 22-26; Intro to Digital Audio, July 29-Aug. 2. Contact: Summer Institute, Visual Studies Workshop, 31 Prince St., Rochester, NY 14607; (716) 442-8676.

**YELLOWSTONE MEDIA ARTS** summer workshops: series of 1-wk workshops, lectures, discussions, exercises & screenings, June 17-July 25. Cinema & Social Change in Latin America, Grant Writing, Advanced Cinematography, Capturing Images & Sounds of Culture, From Manager to Mogul: The Business of Making Films, Scriptwriting, Documentary & Endangered Cultures. Reasonable course fees & accommodation costs. Contact: Paul Monaco, Dept. of Media & Theatre Arts, Montana State Univ., Bozeman, MT 59717; (406) 994-6224.

## Films ■ Tapes Wanted

**ALTERNATIVE MUSIC TELEVISION WYOU,** Madison, WI public access, is now accepting music-related videos for broadcast. Prefer VHS. Contact: Rick Sheridan, Alternative Music TV, 140 W. Gilman St., Madison, WI 53703; (608) 258-9644.

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Notices are listed free of charge. AIVF members receive first priority; others are included as space permits. *The Independent* reserves the right to edit for length. Deadlines for Notices will be respected. These are the 8th of the month, two months prior to cover date, e.g., June 8 for the August/September issue. Send to: Independent Notices, FIVF, 625 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.

McAlpin House, 50 W. 34th St., Ste. 5C6, New York, NY 10001; (212) 594-6460.

**FESTIVAL ON TIBET** seeks films and videos on Tibet &/or Buddhism. Fest held in NYC Oct. 1991. Deadline: June 1. Contact: Somi Roy or Zette Emmons, (212) 277-6895.

**IMAGE UNION:** Chicago public TV's weekly half-hour series featuring ind. films & tapes seeks submissions no longer than 27 min. on 3/4". Contact: Image Union, WTTW/Chicago, 5400 N. St. Louis Ave., Chicago, IL 60625.

**VIDEOSPACE:** Public access show seeks films & tapes under 30 min. Any genre. Seen on dozen+ stations in US. No pay. Contact: Kevin Lindenmuth, 37-33 28th St., #24, Long Island City, NY 11101; (718) 361-2102.

## Opportunities ■ Gigs

**INSTRUCTORS/VIDEOGRAPHERS:** Summer positions w/ Legacy Int'l to train youths, ages 14-18. Duties incl. instruction in video prod. & media, some program documentation. Located 4 hrs SW of Washington, DC. June 17-Aug. 22. Contact: Marlene, Legacy Int'l, Rte. 4, Bedford, VA 24523; (703) 297-5982.

**INTERNSHIPS** avail. at Film/Video Arts. Min. 6 mo. commitment, 15 hrs/week work in exch. for free media classes, access to equipment & facilities. Minorities strongly encouraged. Appls. received at all times. Contact: Angie Cohn, Intern Coordinator, F/VA, 817 Broadway, New York, NY 10003-4797; (212) 673-9361.

**MEDIA ARTIST** sought by Univ. of Michigan for courses in film & video prod. as 3-yr lecturer. Send letter & vita to: Ira Konigsberg, Program in Film & Video Studies, Univ. of Michigan, 2512 Frieze Bldg., Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1285.

**RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS:** Indo-US Subcommission on Educ. & Culture offers long & short-term awards in all academic disciplines for 1992-93 research in India. Scholars & professionals w/ limited or no prior experience in India encouraged to apply. Deadline: June 15. Fulbright

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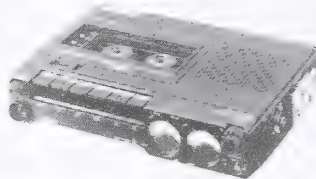
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## Publications

NAMAC MAIN TRAVEL SHEET lists alternative & ind. media arts works & provides forum for exchanging long-range programming ideas. Subscription now benefit of membership in Nat'l Alliance of Media Arts Centers. Contact: MAIN Travel Sheet, NAMAC, 480 Potrero Ave., San Francisco, CA 94110; (415) 861-0202.

## Resources • Funds

CPB TELEVISION PROGRAM FUND announces multicultural programming solicitation for development & production of 58 min. programs for nat'l public TV broadcast. Proposals may be submitted in 3 areas: children's & educational, news & public affairs & drama. Producer & director must be minorities. Deadline: August 15. For guidelines, contact: Multicultural Programming Solicitation, TV Program Fund, CPB, 901 E Street, NW, Washington DC 20004-2006; (202) 879-9600.

EXPERIMENTAL TV CENTER Residency Program offers artists opportunity to study techniques of video image processing during 5-day intensive residency. Deadline: July 15. Also provides small grants to nonprofits to assist w/ presentation of audio, video & related electronic art. Deadline ongoing. Contact: ETC, 180 Front St., Owego, NY 13827; (607) 687-1423.

LIGHTWORK: 1-month residency in Syracuse, NY, for artists working in photography &/or electronic image processing. Send letter of intent w/ slides or VHS tape & SASE to: Residency, LightWork, 316 Waverly Ave., Syracuse, NY 13244; (315) 443-2450.

MCKNIGHT FELLOWSHIPS for interdisciplinary artists in MN. Geared towards mid-career to established artists who have received strong recognition for their work. Funds avail. to create new work, travel to work with a mentor, or other purposes. Contact: Intermedia Arts McKnight Fellowships, 425 Ontario SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414; (612) 627-4444.

MIDATLANTIC ARTS FOUNDATION Visual Arts Travel Fund assists curators & administrators from small to mid-sized orgs to attend conferences, workshops & special exhibitions. Contact: Visual Arts Travel Fund, MidAtlantic Arts Foundation, 11 E. Chase St., Ste. 2A, Baltimore, MD 21202; (301) 539-6656.

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES: Humanities Projects in Media deadline: Sept. 13. Contact: James Dougherty, NEH, 1100 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20506; (202) 786-0278.

NEW YORK FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS Artists Fellowships in Film & Video. Deadline: Oct. 4. Contact: NYFA, 5 Beekman St., New York, NY 10038; (212) 233-3900.

NICHOLL FELLOWSHIP IN SCREENWRITING: Up to 5 fellowships of \$20,000 awarded to persons who have



not earned money writing, sold or optioned screenplay/teleplay. Contact: Academy Foundation, Nicholl Fellowship in Screenwriting, 8949 Wilshire Blvd., Box 5511, Beverly Hills, CA 90209.

**PARENTS' CHOICE FOUNDATION** 1991 Awards seeks children's videos released after July 1990. Deadline: June 28. Contact: 1991 Awards, Parents' Choice Foundation, 1191 Chestnut St., Newton, MA 02164; (617) 965-5913.

**PIVFA SUBSIDY PROGRAM** to facilitate completion of ind., noncommercial projects by members of PA Independent Film/Video Assoc. Grants range from \$500 to \$1,000. Deadline: June 12. For complete guidelines & form, call (215) 895-6594.

**SOUTH CAROLINA ARTS COMMISSION:** Artist Fellowships deadline: Sept. 15. Contact: SCAC, 1800 Gervais St., Columbia, SC 29201.

**STOCKHOLM ELECTRONIC ARTS AWARD** of \$1,800 for video w/ electroacoustic music. Fee: \$25. Deadline: June 10. Contact: Stockholm Electronic Arts Award, Svenska Rikskonserter, Box 1225, S-111 82 Stockholm, Sweden.

**VIDEO GRANT:** San Francisco Artspace offers artists access to video hi-8 equipment & audio facilities. May request ass't for full project or postprod. only. Nonresidents of greater Bay Area eligible for travel & per diem honoraria up to \$2,000. Grants awarded to artists & ind. producers for noncommercial videos in experimental, narrative, editorial/nonfiction & doc. Deadline: Sept. 15. Contact: San Francisco Artspace, 1286 Folsom St., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 626-9100; fax: (415) 431-6612.

## AIVF REGIONAL CORRESPONDENTS

AIVF has a network of regional correspondents who can provide membership information, hold meetings, and aid recruitment in areas of the country outside New York City. AIVF members are urged to contact them about AIVF-related needs and problems, your activities, and other relevant information and news:

**Howard Aaron**, Northwest Film and Video Ctr., 1219 S.W. Park Ave., Portland, OR 97205; (503) 221-1156

**Cheryl Chisolm**, 2844 Engle Road, NW, Atlanta, GA 30318; (404) 792-2167

**Dee Davis**, Appalshop, 306 Whitesburg, KY 41858; (606) 633-0108

**Loni Ding**, 2335 Jones St., San Francisco, CA 94133; (415) 474-5132; 673-6428

**Dai Sil Kim-Gibson**, 1752 17th St., NW, Washington, DC 20009; (202) 232-6912

**Deanna Morse**, School of Communication, Grand Valley State Univ., Allendale, MI 49401; (616) 895-3101

**Lourdes Portillo**, 981 Esmeralda St., San Francisco, CA 94110; (415) 824-5850

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## MEMBERABILIA

Kudos to AIVF member **Academy Award** winners Barbara Kopple, whose *American Dream* netted Best Feature Documentary, and Steven Okazaki, whose *Days of Waiting* garnered Best Short Subject Documentary. Congratulations to **Guggenheim Memorial Foundation** winners Robert Epstein and Doug Hall. Congrats to **National Asian American Telecommunications Association** program grant recipients Kayo Hatta, *Picture Bride*; Shu Lea Cheang, *For Whom the Air Waves*; Janice Tanaka, *Who's Going to Pay for These Donuts Anyway?*; Loni Ding, *Ancestors in America*; and Amy Kato, *Skidrow Mama*. *The Lost Notebooks of Amelia Earhart*, by Kathleen Sweeny and Jeffrey Marino, has earned a Meritorious Achievement by an Emerging Artist award from the **Atlanta Film and Video Festival**. Ken Burns has been named TV producer of the year by the **Producers Guild of America**. Kudos to Eleanor Hamerow and Naomi Trubowitz for *The Journey Within*, winner of a **CINE Golden Eagle**. New York **Emmy Awards** have been given to member Thomas Harris for *Radical Reverends*, Outstanding Religious Programming, and Laurie Anderson, Outstanding Fine Arts/Cultural/Historical Programming. Whit Stillman earned a Best Feature Award from the **Independent Spirit Awards** for *Metropolitan*. **George Foster Peabody Awards** were handed out to Steven Okazaki for *Days of Waiting*, Blackside for *Eyes on the Prize II*, and filmmaker Frederick Wiseman. Member Lynn Hershman has been awarded a **Danish Government Film Office/Danish Film Workshop** grant to collaborate with two Danish video artists. A **Rome Prize** goes to member Matthew Geller. Don Iarussi has earned the 1991 Best Video in the Category of Drama, Comedy-Drama by the **National Broadcasting Society**. The 1990 Jay Leyda Prize in Cinema Studies has gone to Charles Musser for his book *The Emergence of Cinema: The American Screen to 1907*.

## EDITING AND TRANSFERS SAVE 25%

**Quark Video** is offering a 25 percent discount to AIVF members on 3/4" to 3/4" or VHS to 3/4" self-service, off-line editing. Effective through July 1, 1991 (or longer, if interest is shown).

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*The Independent* reaches its first stop, the New York General Post Office, by no later than the 25th of each month. This means that by June 25, for example, the July issue is out of AIVF's hands.

If your copy of *The Independent* arrives sporadically or not at all, and you've made sure we have your correct name and address in our computer database, please consider upgrading your mailing service to first class delivery. The cost is now \$15 per year, due to the Postal Service's recent rate increase.

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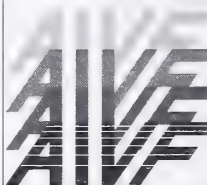
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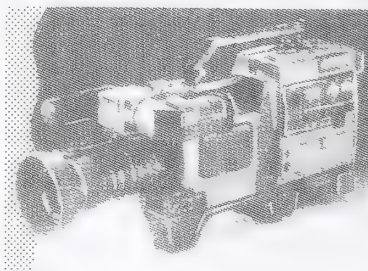
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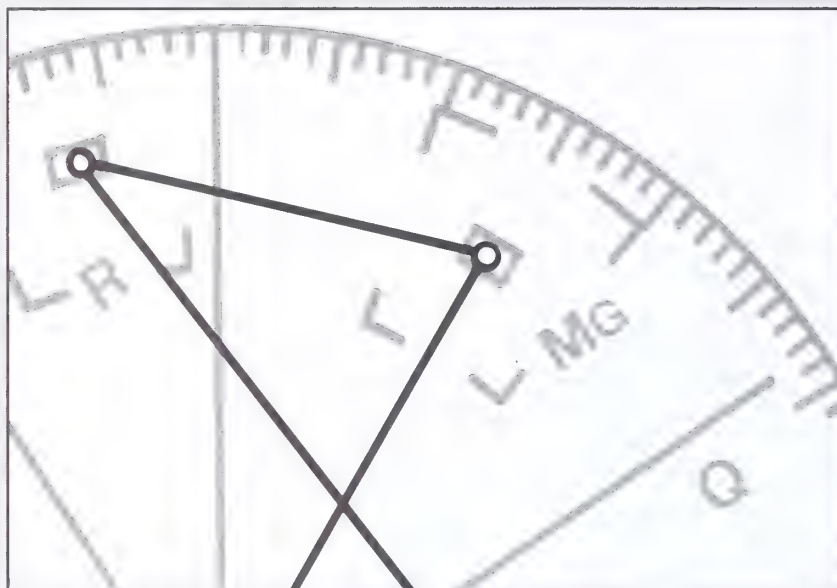
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COVER: Beverly Garland and Beulah from *It Conquered the World*, one of Roger Corman's early cheapster movies and part of the director's ongoing critique of Science. Corman's autobiography *How I Made a Hundred Movies in Hollywood and Never Lost a Dime* is reviewed in this special book issue, together with recent publications on women's cinema, Hollywood and the Vietnam War, Asian Canadian media, television culture, and feminism and avant-garde media.

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## PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION

### New Film Venues in Los Angeles, Boston, and New York City

#### AFI'S USA INDEPENDENT SHOWCASE IN LOS ANGELES

Despite the fact that Los Angeles has more movie screens than any other city in the country, independent films are difficult to see here. It takes a lot of hoopla and promotion to be heard amid the din

created by the latest Hollywood releases, and most distributors won't take the risk of promoting a film that doesn't have a guaranteed audience. But the situation for independents may be improving, at least for the short term. Laemmle Theaters, which runs a number of art houses in the LA area, has teamed up with the American Film Institute to launch a new program, the AFI USA Independent Showcase, designed to give US independent films a limited release in Tinsel Town.

The pilot program runs eight weeks, from April 26 to June 20, and includes some potentially popular fare. The series opens with Charles Burnett's *My Brother's Wedding*, followed by Rob Nilsson's *Heat and Sunlight* and a series of shorts by Les Blank. The line-up also includes Gregg Araki's *The Long Weekend (O' Despair)*, Sharon Greytak's *Hearing Voices*, Marva Nabili's *Night Songs*, Pat O'Neill's *Water and Power*, and Billy Wood-

berry's *Bless Their Little Hearts*. All the films in the Independent Showcase program have no theatrical distribution.

The business plan is simple. Each film receives a one-week release at the Laemmle Monica Cinema, located in a well-trafficked pedestrian mall. The films are launched with advertising, a press screening, and a flyer at no cost to the filmmakers. Expenses to AFI and the theater are covered by the

first thousand tickets sold. After this point, the filmmaker receives a sliding scale percentage of the box office. Each film opens on a Friday night and is screened 25 times during the week. At \$6.50 per ticket in a house that holds 220 seats, potential revenue is a substantial \$35,740. Ken Wlaschin, director of exhibitions for AFI and curator of the Showcase, expects the program to continue at least a year and at that point to become self-supporting. It is currently subsidized by a \$60,000 grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

Bob Laemmle of Laemmle Theaters sees the AFI Showcase as a kind of Film Forum West, referring to New York City's successful theater for international independent films. Laemmle's screenings of independent work have been sporadic in the past, he explains, because independents often can't afford the promotion needed to open their films, and Laemmle can't afford to open the films without it. "Filmmakers raise all the money to make their film and spend every penny to finish it," he says. "Normally, money to open the film would come from distributors, but independents [without distributors] get stuck."

Laemmle figures his break-even point is about 1,000 tickets a week, which is roughly what the theater now brings in with a range of art house films. Like Wlaschin, he hopes the program will last at least a year, but warns that if the screenings don't draw an audience, the theater will bail out sooner.

Wlaschin hopes the screenings will lead to interest from distributors, but the filmmakers seem doubtful. Les Blank admits that short films like his are notoriously difficult to distribute and says he's given up approaching distributors. Gregg Araki, a Los Angeles filmmaker who shoots in 16mm black and white, has also not been welcomed by commercial theatrical distributors. *Long Weekend* premiered at the 1989 AFI Festival, made the circuit of international festivals, and disappeared. Charles Burnett, who has the best shot of benefitting from the new venue since his feature *To Sleep with Anger* received national distribution and acclaim last year, admits that he doesn't understand the rules of film distribution. Nevertheless he hopes that the Showcase will demonstrate to distributors and studios that independent films can draw an audience. But it won't be easy, he cautions, since independent films require the cultivation of an audience. Still, despite general skepticism about the Showcase lead-



Queen Ida and friend in *Yum, Yum, Yum*, Les Blank's film on Southern Louisiana culture and cooking, which was included in the AFI USA Independent Showcase.

Photo: Irene Young, courtesy American Film Institute



ing to fame, fortune, and worldwide distribution, the filmmakers are delighted their films will be seen. "That's why I make them," says Araki.

BARBARA OSBORN

*L.A. journalist Barbara Osborn writes regularly for The Independent and other film and video publications.*

## THE SOMERVILLE, COOLIDGE, AND BRATTLE THEATERS IN BOSTON

In the 1970s Boston had an abundance of theaters regularly booking foreign, classic, and independent films. Remember the pretty Exeter Street, the legendary Orson Welles with its film school, the Central Square where you could sneak through the bathrooms to a second movie on the other screen? Many area producers got a liberal film education in those theaters, along with the Symphony, 733, Kenmore, and others. Now all are gone, while the Nickelodeon, Janus (née Galleria), and Harvard Square have been absorbed into the Loews theater chain, one of the largest in the US and very dominant in the Boston market.

The good news is that a new six-screen Orson Welles Theater is being planned for Cambridge, according to veteran film programmer George Mansour, who books art films into independent theaters throughout the Northeast. However, the venture is on hold until the regional economy improves.

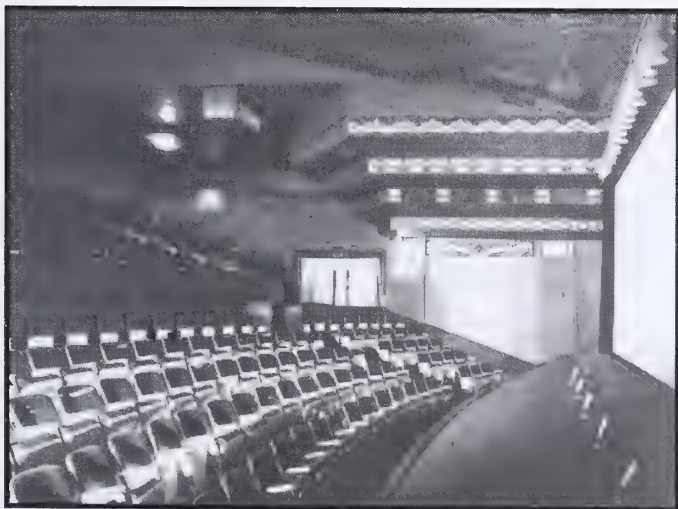
In the meantime, filmgoers can see prominent art films along the lines of *My Left Foot*, *Ay Carmela*, and *Ju Dou* at about 17 of Loews' Boston screens. But for a steady diet of alternative, low-budget fare from the US and abroad, filmgoers must rely on three art houses, which all lead a precarious existence. The Brattle, Coolidge Corner, and Somerville Theaters have not closed, as was feared two years ago, but they continue to face the same pressures that imperil independently owned theaters across the country.

The Coolidge Corner Theater in Brookline was slated for the wrecking ball in 1988 when unpre-

dictable attendance and the inflated real estate market brought on its sale to the same outfit that turned the Exeter into a yuppie retail mall. In an extraordinary commitment of personal energy, local art film programmer David Kleiler pulled together a coalition to form a nonprofit foundation and save the cavernous theater in the nick of time. To gain the stability of a 99-year lease, however, Kleiler's group had to make a deal with a notorious Boston real estate mogul, Harold Brown. While Brown appears to support the idea of a old moviehouse in his hometown, it's clear that art cinema is not his bailiwick. Even though the theater has strong programming and good audiences, revenues remain paramount. Tensions between the landlord and theater escalated during the Gulf War, when gate receipts fell 40 percent and the theater couldn't pay two months' rent (which constitutes the bulk of its substantial \$21,000 per week overhead). Kleiler is now facing the threat of eviction. Though finding himself again negotiating with Brown at the eleventh hour, Kleiler hangs onto his optimism. For the long term, though, he believes, "Sole ownership is the only way I can see to insure the future of a theater that wants to take risks."

In a positive development across town, Kleiler was engaged this spring by the Somerville Theater to do programming and promotion. Two years ago, art programmer Garen Daley lost his lease, and owner Richard Fraiman was considering converting the Somerville, a fine old vaudeville and movie house, to retail or office use. The grassroots community group Friends in Support of the Somerville Theater (FISST) drummed up vital support to continue its use as a single-screen art house. This winter Fraiman wisely negotiated with Kleiler and hired a FISST organizer part-time to help revive his much-loved theater.

Fortunately the Somerville's overhead is relatively small, lessening the financial crisis atmosphere prevalent at independent theaters. Kleiler wants to use the Somerville creatively, programming for its distinctive, politically progressive neighborhood audience. He models both the Somerville and Coolidge on New York's nonprofit independent theater Film Forum and anticipates move-overs as well as special joint openings between the two to boost publicity and save on overhead.



Boston's Coolidge Corner arthouse theater still faces an uncertain future.

Courtesy Coolidge Corner Theater Foundation

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In Cambridge, the 100-year-old Brattle Theater reopened in February after missing three seasons due to renovations necessitated by the landlord's changes to the building. It continues its repertory programming, interspersing classic Hollywood and foreign features with special programs like authors' readings and the Gay and Lesbian Film Festival in an effort to woo the constant stream of passers-by in Harvard Square. Marianne Lampke and Connie White took over operations in 1986 and have strengthened their presence in the press and with audiences, even though faced with \$14,000 a week in overhead that forces a degree of conservatism in the programming.

As a result of escalating rent, the high cost of shipping frequently changing films, and the fierce competition for press coverage, these three theaters are limited in their ability to exhibit low-budget independent work. Kleiler, White, and Lampke all reiterate the handicaps: limited time and resources, the consumer education required, plus the fact that independent works often arrive with little attendant publicity. Although the Brattle may gamble on a three-week run of a high-visibility feature like Todd Haynes' *Poison*, box office considerations upstage their taking riskier ventures. Kleiler can program documentaries like Mark Kitchell's *Berkeley in the Sixties* or Anne Bohlen, Kevin Rafferty, and James Ridgeway's *Blood in the Face* because he counts on his politicized neighbors to turn out. Bo Smith, film programmer at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts (MFA), who recently collaborated with Kleiler on the *Berkeley* run, observed, "The most talented artists tend to be less good at self-promotion." His colleagues concur, citing extra telephone time and exceptional demands from certain artists as an additional deterrent to booking many independent films.

Boston's nontheatrical venues offer cineastes and videophiles a surprising number of outlets to see challenging work. There's lively, intelligent programming at the MFA, Massachusetts College of Art Film Society, the Harvard Film Archives, as well as the Harvard-Epworth Church in Cambridge. But the future of one prominent venue, the Institute of Contemporary Art, is in doubt. ICA curator of media and performing arts Kathy Rae Huffman was laid off this summer and film programmer George Mansour will be leaving the ICA in August. Acting director Elisabeth Sussman says,

**New York-area students  
like Juan Carols Martinez  
(*Palingenesis*) have a new  
public television outlet on  
WNYC's *First Exposure*.**

Courtesy WNYC-TV

"We have not abandoned exhibition of film or video," citing the museum's financial situation, plus the pending choice of a new director, as factors that will shape the ICA's future commitment to film and video. Under former director David Ross, a strong proponent of media arts exhibition who left the ICA to head the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City, film and video were full-fledged disciplines. It remains to be seen how his successor will choose to use the ICA theater.

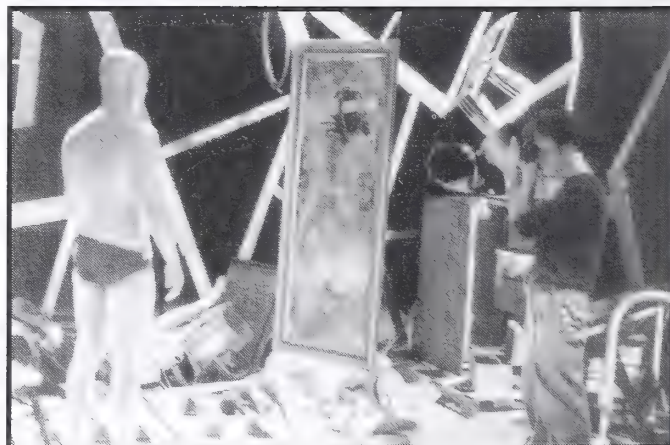
TONI TREADWAY

*Toni Treadway lives in Somerville, Massachusetts, where she coauthored Super 8 in the Video Age with Bob Brodsky.*

## FIRST EXPOSURE AND CINEMA VILLAGE IN NEW YORK CITY

Like proud parents, the film schools of New York City frequently boast of the accomplishments of alumni who have gained prominence in the film industry. The names of Amy Heckerling, Spike Lee, Martin Scorsese, Susan Seidelman, and Oliver Stone repeatedly pop up, as do those of more recent graduates, like Columbia University's Adam Davidson, whose film *The Lunch Date* garnered this year's Academy Award for live action short. Newly taking advantage of the potential treasure-trove offered by local film schools is the municipally-owned public television station WNYC, which has developed a weekly half-hour showcase for student work from the New York-New Jersey-Connecticut area.

The series, called *First Exposure*, is another demonstration of WNYC's commitment to its local urban constituency. This priority is increasingly out of sync with public television's current belief that the best way to court audiences is through national programming. But as WNYC-TV managing director David Sit explains, "The view of [WNYC president Thomas Morgan] and I is different from other stations. We feel that PBS should not go after national programming but should first look at the needs of people in the community and how the station can serve them." Sit admits, "Programs like *First Exposure* are probably not of interest to most public television







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stations, because they won't generate a lot of membership." In fact, when WNYC informally checked with other stations to determine if any produced and regularly scheduled a student film series, they found none.

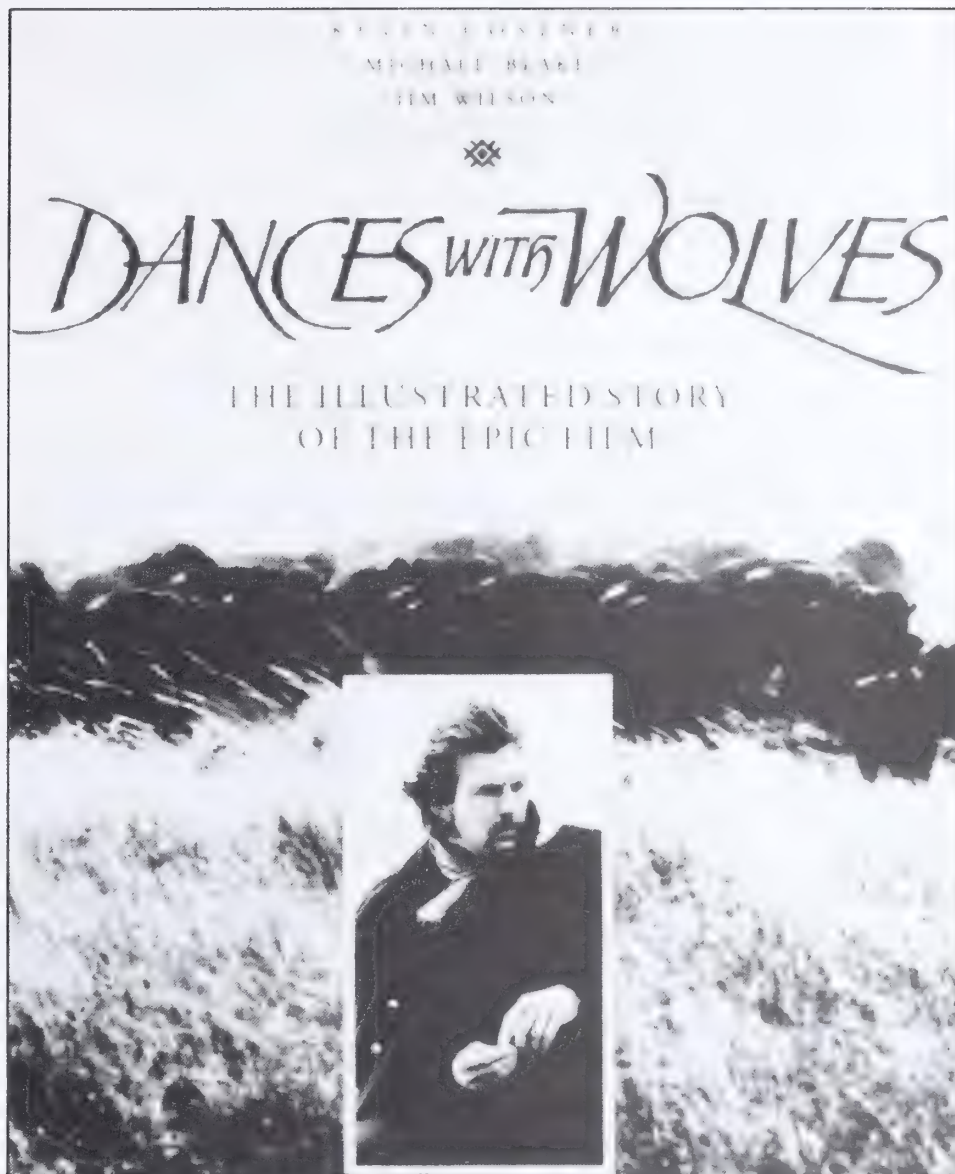
The first season of *First Exposure*, which premiered January 28 and ran 26 weeks, included films representing a variety of experimental and narrative approaches and ranging from four to 30 minutes. Most were senior year projects by students or recent graduates from New York University, the New School for Social Research, Columbia University, the School of Visual Arts, Rutgers University, Columbia University, and the University of Bridgeport in Connecticut.

The series will "definitely be renewed," assures Sit, with 13 weeks of reruns scheduled for the summer, followed by a 39-week season beginning in October. The station plans to seek an underwriter for the series, allowing it to expand outreach to students "and possibly have judgments and awards," says Sit. During the first season, students were paid a modest stipend of \$10 per minute. "One of the most rewarding things for us was when the students came in to pick up their checks," recalls Sit. "They're so happy; many throw a party that night. It's really heart-warming."

The films are selected by a committee of three, including Sit, series producer Todd Chanko, and director of broadcasting Neal Hecker. Films may be shot in any format, but must be submitted on videotape, have all rights cleared, and be available for exclusive first-time broadcast on WNYC. The deadline is ongoing. Interested students should send a three-quarter-inch or VHS cassette with a one-page description and resumé to: Todd Chanko, First Exposure, WNYC-TV, One Centre Street, New York, NY 10007.

On the theatrical front, there is some welcome news for independents seeking a New York City showcase. Independent theater owner Nick Nicolaou is abandoning repertory programming at his Cinema Village 12 and Cinema Village on Third Avenue (formerly the Bijou) in favor of first-run independent and foreign fare. He has hired veteran film programmer George Mansour to book these single-screen art houses, plus the twin screens at the Bleecker Street Cinema. Nicolaou acquired a 15-year lease for this Greenwich Village theater, now renamed the Bleecker Movie House, which last year was doomed to become a home video store. Nicolaou cautions, "It still could close." He is currently looking for a financial partner to keep the theater going and help cover the \$50,000 needed to renovate this historic but dog-eared movie house. Without a partner, "I don't have enough money to maintain it plus the other two theaters," Nicolaou admits. Sadly, because of zoning laws, should the Bleecker ever be turned into a commercial space, it can never revert back to being a theater.

In the meantime, the cinema will continue to play independent work. Mansour, who books all four of Nicolaou's screens as well as numerous



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independent theaters throughout the Northeast, is programming "mostly independent films ignored by the chains and even larger independent theaters, such as the Angelika Film Center and City Cinemas." Henry Jaglom's *Eating is Cinema 12's* current bill, and Raúl Ruiz's *The Golden Boat* is slated to receive its US theatrical premiere at the Bleecker. Mansour will also be booking documentary films, such as *A Letter to Harvey Milk*, by Yariv Cohn, and *Forever Activists*, Judith Montell's film on the Lincoln Brigade, as well as foreign subtitled works like *The Vanishing*, by Dutch director George Sluizer, and *Noir et Blanc*, by French director Claire Devers. "I'll be looking for this kind of [independent] work," promises Mansour, who encourages filmmakers to contact him at: 180 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02116; (617) 266-9129.

PATRICIA THOMSON

## CPB'S MULTICULTURAL MONIES IN THE PIPELINE

Responding to concerns about the scarcity of minority programming in public broadcasting, Congress specified in the Public Telecommunications Act of 1988 that the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) set aside funds for production grants to "producers...addressing the needs and interests of minorities." The recommended \$3-million per year, earmarked to begin flowing in FY 1990, is finally making its way into producers' hands.

Because the delay spanned two fiscal years, CPB now has a total of \$6-million to disburse. Two-thirds will go directly to producers of color via the Multicultural Programming Fund administered by CPB. The remaining one-third will be divided up equally among five minority consortia, which will redistribute them to their respective constituencies: the Native American Public Broadcasting Consortium (NAPCB), National Asian American Telecommunications Association (NAATA), National Black Programming Consortium, National Latino Communication Center, and a consortium for Pacific Islander producers now being formed.

Half of the Multicultural Programming Fund's \$4-million will be awarded to between 15 and 30 producers, chosen from the 216 applicants who submitted proposals before the April 15th deadline, according to Charles Deaton, project coordinator at CPB's Television Programming Fund. The other half will be granted in a second round for which applications are due August 15.

The minority consortia's \$2-million is being disbursed by each according to its own schedule. Last winter NAATA regranted a total of \$300,000 for 21 research and development grants to Asian American producers. The Nebraska-based NAPCB closed a round of proposals on April 1 and plans its next solicitation in October or November of this year. Meanwhile the National Latino Communication Center's first request for



# Multicultural Programming Board members objected to what they viewed as traditionally exclusionary code phrases like "national interest," used by public television in the past to reject work from communities of color.

proposals had a deadline of May 31. The group also subcontracted with the New York-based Latino Collaborative to administer a regrant program in the Northeast and Puerto Rico. Their first round also closed May 31, and awards will fall in the \$500 to \$1,500 range. Ten African American producers have been awarded grants from the National Black Programming Consortium in Columbus, Ohio, which plans another round for July. As for the Pacific Islander constituency, CPB money is helping establish a consortium in Hawaii that will replace the previous consortium, the now defunct San Francisco-based Pacific Educational Network. The new organization is being developed by Honolulu producer Heather Guigni in conjunction with a seven-member working group. Plans to nominate a board of directors have been drawn up, and an official proposal went to CPB following the working group's meeting in May.

Ironically, the delay in getting funds to producers of color is partly due to the Public Broadcasting Act itself. In contrast to the language in the same bill creating the Independent Television Service (ITVS), which specifies that ITVS be administered separately from CPB, the bill does not detail the mechanics of disbursing minority programming funds. As a result, CPB representatives and consortia leaders have spent the past few years hammering out granting procedures—who should be in charge, how the guidelines should read, who should select readers and panelists, and so on.

Immediately after the bill's passage, a number of producers' representatives formed the Task Force on National Minority Programming to make recommendations to CPB about the dispersal of multicultural funds. Headed by NAATA executive director James Yee and including the NAPCB and the Latino Consortium, the task force submitted a report to the agency in December 1989 urging it to dedicate \$1-million per year to the consortia for research and development grants and \$2-million annually for general solicitations through CPB's Multicultural Programming Fund. CPB agreed to these recommendations. In addition, the agency established a Multicultural Programming Board in conjunction with the task force in August 1990 to work on distributing the Multicultural Programming Funds. The body of 15 representatives from the multicultural media community, selected by CPB from a list drawn up

by the task force, was charged with overseeing the grantmaking process as well as nominating readers and panelists. CPB agreed to take care of the administration of the grants.

The two meetings held thus far between the board and CPB did yield some concrete results—including a preliminary agreement that the Multicultural Programming Board should select panelists—but in February relations worsened. According to some board members, CPB sent out application guidelines for the first round without incorporating some of the board's recommended changes. The board quickly issued a press release in which board member Toni Cade Bambara protests, "The guidelines failed to reflect many of the recommendations made by the MPB committee...nor could it reflect the changes members intended to recommend in the second meeting" which was originally scheduled for January, but held a week before the mailing.

Among the points of disagreement were the guidelines' language and programming priorities. Board members objected to what they viewed as traditionally exclusionary code phrases. These include "national interest," which has been used by public television in the past to reject work from communities of color as being of "special interest" or "limited interest," as well as "objectivity," which has served as a rationale for rejecting both advocacy pieces and culturally informed projects. Bambara also faults the CPB guidelines for not stressing programming priorities outlined by the board—specifically, projects that "in content, perspective, and style challenge monoculturalist viewpoints." The board wanted to solicit proposals for culturally specific perspectives on the 1992 Columbus quincentenary and presidential election, the drug economy, and the judicial system.

But it was more than the language and tone of the guidelines that bothered the Multicultural Programming Board. To Bambara and fellow board member Stephen Gong, CPB's mailing of the guidelines before finalizing their content with the board signaled an unforgivable case of establishment muscle-flexing. The board viewed itself as a partner in policy and decision-making, not merely an advisory board. "What CPB did was very plain to us," says Gong. "They completely ignored the process involved. We are not viewed [by CPB] as a true board."

Despite this setback in relations, both sides seem committed to forging ahead in the interest of

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getting money out to producers of color. In a gesture of conciliation, CPB Television Programming Fund director Don Marbury has published part of the board's press release in the CPB's newsletter and sent the entire release out to the readers and panelists for this initial round. Although Marbury says the guidelines are already printed for the August 15 deadline and cannot be revised, he plans to change them in 1992. Explaining CPB's view of the controversy, Marbury states, "It's a big board, and the polemic we had is good polemic, not negative polemic. We will not run away from [the relationship with the board]. It's one of the best groups of people who are committed to multicultural programming and public broadcasting." Still, there are differing perceptions of the board's role. Marbury insists, "As far as we are concerned [the board] is an advisory group. If it wants to be something else, it must use other means to achieve this."

QUYNH THAI

*Quynh Thai is an independent producer and freelance writer living in New York City.*

## GAY AND LESBIAN FUND ESTABLISHED

The Funding Exchange has announced the creation of the Out Fund for Lesbian and Gay Liberation. This new fund will provide support to grassroots organizations that work against homophobia and heterosexism, identify connections between these and other oppressions, address related aspects of sexual politics, and forge coalitions that will take action on these issues. A small portion of this fund will go to film and video projects, channelled through the existing Paul Robeson Fund within the Funding Exchange. There are no special guidelines or application processes for the Out Fund. Rather, media grants will be awarded based on recommendations from the Robeson panel. The deadline for the Robeson Fund is December 1. Contact: Funding Exchange, 666 Broadway, Suite 500, New York, NY 10012.

MARY JANE SKALSKI

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## FILM FINDERS PLAYS THE DATA GAME

In August 1989 Sydney Levine vacated her position as vice president of acquisitions and development at Republic Pictures to found her own company. Called Film Finders, the enterprise is dedicated to serving those in the business of feature film acquisitions. An outgrowth of Levine's awareness that independent distributors and foreign buyers lack a central repository of information on films currently in production, Film Finders will offer a consolidated listing of nonstudio features, plus details on available rights, budgets, key personnel, and contacts. Levine hopes to enable distribution companies to have "all the advantages of an acquisitions department without staff costs."

Film Finders maintains a computerized data-



base which lists approximately 1,800 US independent and English-language foreign films currently in production or looking for distribution deals. From this information, the *Independent Tracking Report* is extracted and published on a quarterly basis. Clients who subscribe for an annual fee of \$5,000 can access information according to genre, budget, producer, director, or rights available. For an additional \$2,500 to \$5,000, particularly eager subscribers may obtain the *Monthly Update* and weekly *Friday Report*. Levine explains that there is no charge to filmmakers for listings, but each listed production must already possess a director and cast or be partially financed. The *Report* consists primarily of fiction features in a late stage of development where US and foreign rights are still available. No film may be more than a year old, and the report does not list scripts. Muses Levine, "I used to just listen to friends talk of their films, but now it goes in one ear and into the computer."

For further information, contact: Sydney J. Levine, Film Finders, 718 Westbourne Drive, W. Hollywood, CA 90069; (213) 657-6397; fax: (213) 657-6608.

DOMINIC FACCINI

*Dominic Faccini is freelance writer who contributes to Sight and Sound.*

## KODAK DEVELOPS NEW TALENT

Eastman Kodak has established a \$300,000 endowment fund to provide tuition scholarships for senior and graduate level students of cinematography at US colleges and universities. An attempt to help nurture the next generation of filmmakers under the Kodak banner, this initiative is part of a wider Kodak education drive spanning the US, Canada, and Europe. "Finally someone is training future filmmakers," says Ken Dancyger, head of Undergraduate Film and Television at New York University. "Kodak realizes it is important to get filmmakers when they are young. I wish it were true of other industry giants, but they are the only company I know of doing this kind of thing and putting money where it is needed."

The endowment fund and scholarship program will be administered by the University Film and Video Foundation, a nonprofit organization founded in 1957 for the purpose of "furthering charitable, literary, artistic, scientific, and educational activities using photo/electronic media for communication." The foundation began accepting applications this spring and will name the first of two \$5,000 winners this fall. Applicants must be nominated by the universities with which they are affiliated. Each university or college is limited to two candidates.

For applications, contact: Eastman Scholarship Program, University Film and Video Foundation, c/o RTVF Division, Box 13138, Denton, TX 76203-3138.

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## SEQUELS

The most recent salvo fired against the **National Endowment for the Arts** by American Family Association president Donald Wildmon was another dud. In April, following his ineffectual attack on the film *Poison*, by Todd Haynes [see "NEA Adversaries Stung by *Poison*," June 1991], Wildmon sent a letter of complaint to members of Congress, this time disparaging a \$12,000 grant the NEA awarded to Frameline for its 1991 San Francisco International Lesbian and Gay Film Festival. NEA chair John Frohnmayer shot back his own letter to Congress the following week, stating, "Mr. Wildmon's complaint, stripped of rhetoric, seems to be that he doesn't believe Federal funds should go to homosexuals." Frohnmayer asserted, "The Endowment does not blacklist nor does it give or refuse grants on the basis of sexual orientation." He reiterated the NEA's support for work based on artistic merit, quoting the controversial language passed by Congress last year: "[The criteria takes] into consideration general standards of decency and respect for the diverse beliefs and values of the American public." He noted, "This is precisely what we are doing."

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## BEYOND TOONTOWN

### What's on TV? Video Art for Younger Audiences

DARA MEYERS-KINGSLEY

Kids love TV. They gravitate to it as if it had some magnetic pull. There's something in the glow from that box—the flickering, pulsating image—that seduces them. Yet television is completely familiar. It's in everyone's home, and watching it is probably children's major leisure activity. Whenever there is a video screening for adults/general audiences in the Education Gallery at the Brooklyn Museum, where I work, children inevitably emerge from the adjoining art studios to stop and stare.

I watched this happen for two years and decided that it was time to create a video program especially for them. It was not an easy task, since very little video has been made specifically for children, little programming of video by artists for children has been done, and there are no distributors with packages of video works geared specifically toward children. Given these constraints, I chose two kinds of work for the series What's on TV? Video Art for Younger Audiences—video made by artists intended for a general audience but accessible to and engaging for kids and video produced by young people themselves.

I approached the series as an experiment in programming—an education for the next generation of viewers. At the same time I suspected the young people in my audience were quite savvy about television. Since I knew the work well but not the audience, I decided to take a collaborative approach, joining forces with Amanda Erismann, a museum instructor who regularly works with children.

Together we screened tapes and organized them into four 50- to 70-minute thematic programs designed for specific age groups: four- to seven-year-olds who attended with an adult, eight- to 12-year-olds, and 13- to 18-year-old teenagers. Each tape was introduced by a museum educator and followed by a discussion. Program notes were written by an intern in our School, Youth, and Family Programs department, who outlined the content of each tape, demonstrated how the tapes related to others in the program, and highlighted the processes and techniques used in making the work, as well as giving information about the videomakers.

In addition, each screening was followed by a hands-on workshop with a videomaker—and this component proved critical to the success of the program. Through workshops children begin to understand that video, like any other art form, is made by an artist, that it is the result of choices and specific perspectives.

The program for the youngest age group attracted the largest attendance. Parents with children that age seem always in search of things to do with their kids on weekends. The selected tapes were rich in humor, play, and fantasy, and fea-

*Ole and the Tree* (1989), a fairy tale told with animated paintings; and Bruce Hucko's *Have You Ever Seen a Rainbow at Night?* (1989), a documentary which Hucko made in collaboration with Navajo children about images found in Navajo artwork.

This tape proved to be a perfect lead-in to the workshop in which the children were asked to draw pictures that told a story. Too young to handle a camera, the children then explored narrative techniques by making storyboards that illustrated a sequence of events. Their images were drawn on a long piece of paper that could scroll through a box with a rectangular opening that looked like a TV screen.

The tapes in the second program—geared toward eight- to 12-year-olds—examined the search for individual and collective identity in US society, while questioning the assumptions we hold about the American Dream. Four tapes comprised the program: Ardele Lister's *Zoe's Car* (1986), the story of a three-year-old who finds herself the lucky winner of a brand new car; Kamal Kozah's *So Far Away from Ruby Lane* (1988), a *Wizard of Oz*-like account of a man's journey to an unfamiliar city and his attempt to get back home; Ayoka Chenzira's *Zajota and the Boogie Spirit* (1989), a folk tale relating the history of a fictitious African tribe; and Branda Miller's tape made in collaboration with Youth Force '88, *We Have the Force* (1989), about problems faced by today's urban youth. Alonzo Speight, an independent film- and videomaker and teacher, conducted the workshop that accompanied the screenings in which the children improvised dramatic scenes.

The first of two teen programs addressed such complex issues as dating, sex, and drug abuse in New York City, Africa, and Native and Asian American cultures. Intended as an introductory tape, Valerie Soe's *All Orientals Look the Same* (1986), which confronts the oppressive effects of stereotypes, opened the program. This was followed by *Chantal's Choice: The Making of a Modern African Folktale* (1989). Produced by Priscilla Hinckley and Carlyn Saltman in collaboration with a group of African teenagers, *Chantal's Choice* conveys a message from them to their counterparts in the US, offering a glimpse into their culture and the dilemma of a young woman caught between traditional and contem-



**The Brooklyn Museum redefines kidvid by programming works like Ayoka Chenzira's folktale of a mythic African tribe, *Zajota and the Boogie Spirit*.**

Courtesy Filmmakers Library

pered animals and children. But each utilized a different video technique. The program included William Wegman's witty live-action tape *Dog Baseball* (1986), about a baseball game played by dogs; Canadian artist Alex Roshuk's *Les Canards* (*The Ducks*, 1987), which uses object animation/pixilation techniques to follow a flock of marching ducks; California video artist Kamal Kozah's



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Looking at works like Dara Birnbaum's *Technology/Transformation: Wonder Woman*, 13- to 18-year-olds examined the images and assumptions of mass media.

Photo: Marita Sturken, courtesy EAI

porary customs. Joan Jonas' rigorous *Brooklyn Bridge* (1988) reoriented viewers back to the US—back to urban New York City culture. Jonas' tape was followed by two documentaries made by teens working with the Educational Video Center in New York City: *AIDS: Facts over Fear* (1989) and *Abortion: Past, Present, and Future* (1989). Finally, two experimental tapes by adolescent students working with Rise and Shine Productions were screened: *Drugs Are Just a Big Lie* (1988) and *Power in Our Hands* (1989).

EVC program director David Murdock was invited to lead a workshop with the audience for this group of tapes. EVC works with students and teachers on documentaries dealing with social and political issues. Murdock and two EVC students took workshop participants and a camera into the museum galleries, interviewing visitors about their opinions on censorship. After taping, the group reviewed what they had shot and critiqued each other's camerawork and interviewing styles.

The tapes in the final screening featured alternative points of view and forms of expression that counter those of mainstream media. Videos like Max Almy's *Perfect Leader* (1983) and Dara Birnbaum's *Technology/Transformation: Wonder Woman* (1978) suggest a critical approach to mass media and the images it produces. Another tape from EVC, *Nicaragua: Through Our Eyes* (1989), provides an alternative to broadcast news coverage of events in Nicaragua. In the two additional tapes from Rise and Shine, *Hell! No Way Out* (1989) and *My Soul Is* (1989), young videomakers examine their attitudes towards drugs and problems of self-definition. The last two tapes in the program, *Living Inside* (1988) and *A New Year* (1988), were made by Sadie Benning, a teenager with no formal video training. Employing first-person voiceover and in-camera editing, Benning boldly confronts the difficulties she faces as an adolescent lesbian. Laura Vural, executive director of Rise and Shine Productions, then led a workshop with the audience. Like EVC, Rise and Shine works with students and teachers to pro-

duce videos, although their emphasis is artistic expression and their work is often based on poetry.

One of my favorite moments during the entire program occurred when one youngster pointed out that there was a similarity between drugs and advertising: both promise something and don't deliver. Both, he said, are a big lie. This underscores one of the most important goals a cultural institution can achieve through video programming for children: encouraging a critical approach to television. The museum screenings allowed the children to make connections between the different tapes in the programs, as well as between this kind of work and what they see on TV—in terms of artistic experimentation, demanding subject matter, and alternative points of view. But these tapes are not easily found on television. They are not used in schools nor stocked in the local video store.

There are indications that attention to children among independent videomakers and institutions is increasing and becoming more sophisticated. Several distributors of independent videotapes are designing promotional campaigns aimed at elementary and secondary educators. Education is also on the agenda of the New York Media Alliance, which plans to sponsor a symposium bringing together educators and media artists. Two years ago, the National Youth Media Alliance was established at the annual meeting of the National Alliance for Media Arts Centers and has announced its intention to publish a resource book and produce a videotape about media education programs throughout the country.

Today's children are tomorrow's media producers and consumers. Education—in schools, museums, libraries, or at alternative sites for learning—must assume the task of developing their critical viewing skills as well as introducing them to the tools of production.

*Dara Meyers-Kingsley is the coordinator of Film and Video Programs at the Brooklyn Museum.*



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## CONTINENTAL CATALYST

### The European Documentary Film Institute

KAREN ROSENBERG

The European Documentary Film Institute (EDI) was cooked up around the proverbial kitchen table in November 1988. "The idea was not to define a new entity called the 'European documentary' on the model of the 'English' or the 'Swiss documentary' but to lobby for documentaries made in Europe—and that includes Eastern Europe," notes Werner Ruzicka, newly elected chair of EDI's board and director of the Duisburg festival of German-language documentaries. That has meant trying to get existing bodies like the European Script Fund and the Hamburg-based European Film Distribution Office more interested in funding or promoting documentaries [see Mark Nash's guide to these organizations in "What's in an Acronym? Deciphering Media 92 and Other New European Media Initiatives," *The Independent*, March 1990]. And EDI is also a service organization helping filmmakers find information essential to making their films.

For example, EDI is now compiling information for two books. One will provide an annotated list of funding sources for documentary films by or for Europeans, or about Europe. "That way a filmmaker will know that a particular television producer handles travel films and shouldn't be approached with another type of proposal," Ruzicka clarifies. The second is a study of archives—how to get material out of them and films into them. Their holdings will be described. "Someone doing a film on, say, the Spanish Civil War should be able to learn there that there's more material in France than in Spain and which archives have films that show the anarchists only in a bad light," says Ruzicka.

On the one hand, these books will provide a survey of the conditions for documentary filmmaking in Europe, so that recommendations for improvements can then be made. On the other hand, they will be practical reference guides, useful to Americans as well as Europeans. "Even before these works are published, filmmakers can turn to us for information," notes Annette Schilling, managing director of EDI and editor of the *EDI-Bulletin*. EDI is funded by the Land (a political entity roughly like a US state) of North-Rhine Westphalia, which is trying to establish itself as a media center. "But we don't want to get exposés from filmmakers who'd like us to forward their proposals to potential funders," cautions Ruzicka.

By conducting symposia at various festivals—the 1990 International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam and the 1991 Leningrad International Film Festival "Message to Man," for example—EDI has also acquired a reputation as a medium for intellectual exchange. "The word 'institute' in the title was chosen deliberately," Schilling points out, "because we want to deal not just with bread and butter issues but with theoretical matters." Now EDI is becoming more ambitious, organizing its own international conferences, such as a meeting of filmmakers, film historians, and critics devoted to Dziga Vertov in September 1991. The group plans to hold a Winter Academy, with a yearly topic, in Mülheim and a travelling Summer Academy, which Ruzicka dubs "EDI on the road." The first trip, scheduled for spring 1992, will travel the Prague-Vienna-Budapest triangle and consider "The Topography of Exile," since people left this area for political reasons after 1933 and 1968 or are now emigrating because of economic problems. In part the project is intended to move filmmakers away from conventional thinking in terms of rigid national boundaries.

The quarterly *EDI-Bulletin*, in which all articles appear both in German and in understandable if sometimes ungrammatical Euro-English, also helps documentary filmmakers think regionally, even globally.\* Each issue is a meaty 50 pages and describes new institutions (many Europeans, too, need an introduction to the opportunities of a unified Europe), reports on festivals, profiles documentary filmmakers and cinematic traditions, and provides space for theoretical articles. Like the symposia, this is a place where coproduction or codistribution schemes can be discussed; a section of the bulletin called "Wanted" allows filmmakers to detail projects and seek partners. By offering down-to-earth advice and sponsoring debates on the abstractions underlying documentary practices, EDI is meeting the varied needs of filmmakers concerned with Europe.

*Karen Rosenberg writes on film for publications in the US and Western Europe. Her recent articles have appeared in e.p.d. film in Germany and the Boston Globe.*

\* For the time being, subscriptions to the *EDI-Bulletin* can be obtained free to charge. For more information, contact: EDI, In der Alten Post, Postfach 10 05 34, D-4330 Mülheim a.d. Ruhr 1, Federal Republic of Germany; tel: 49-208-47-39-51 or 47-19-34; fax: 49-208-47-87-34.

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## GIRL WATCHING

PATRICIA WHITE

**Woman at the Keyhole: Feminism and Women's Cinema**

by Judith Mayne

Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990; 192 pp.; \$35.00 (cloth), \$12.95 (paper)

Feminist film theory, despite its range and rigor, has been surprisingly slow to address contemporary women's filmmaking. Hollywood is the favorite child of cinema studies, and feminist scholars often replicate this bias. Meantime a body of film and video work so varied it can hardly be unified within the label women's cinema flourishes in women's film festivals and alternative exhibition circuits. Clearly, these films and tapes, to avoid the obscurity that so often engulfs women's work, must also be written about. As the subtitle of Judith Mayne's *The Woman at the Keyhole: Feminism and Women's Cinema* promises, this intelligent, eminently readable volume puts women's filmmaking on the main stage.

A number of useful anthologies such as Charlotte Brunsdon's *Films for Women* or Patricia Erens' new *Issues in Feminist Film Criticism*, as well as several single-authored books such as those by Lucy Fischer, E. Ann Kaplan, and Annette Kuhn, do discuss women's films in conjunction with Hollywood cinema, but they by no means exhaust the topic. *The Woman at the Keyhole*, appearing in the Indiana University Press series *Theories of Representation and Difference* alongside books by leading film theorists Mary Ann Doane, Kaja Silverman, Laura Mulvey, and Teresa de Lauretis (also the series' editor), serves at once as introduction and original contribution to the debates structuring the field. Erudite but never obscure, effectively argued but not polemical, *The Woman at the Keyhole* should prove to be a valuable text for courses on women and cinema.

Each of the book's three relatively autonomous sections pairs a chapter outlining a theoretical context (with examples from classical or early cinema) with a related chapter analyzing a group of films directed by women. Mayne carefully develops her three theoretical paradigms—the screen, female authorship, and “primitive” narration; her close readings of individual films generally confirm the flexibility and usefulness of these critical structures.

In the opening chapter, “Spectacle, Narrative, and Screen,” Mayne attempts to dislodge the privileged position held in current film theory by the gendered hierarchy of the gaze—woman as image/man as bearer of the look, initially theorized by Laura Mulvey in her oft-cited essay “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema.” Mayne regards the cinematic screen, at once barrier and reflective surface, as a figure undermining this rigid subject/object division and the strictly regimented patterns of identification and desire implied by it. Even in a classical film like *The Big Sleep* (1946), Mayne demonstrates that “spectacle” cannot be so easily reduced to the image of woman as ground of cinematic pleasure. Additionally, she cites the film's “homotextuality”—traces of the novel's homosexual content re-



maining in the censored film version.

Questions of identification and division are explored further in the next chapter, “Screen Tests.” Helke Sander's *Redupers* (1977), Julie Dash's *Illusions* (1982), Yvonne Rainer's *The Man Who Envied Women* (1985), and Patricia Rozema's *I Heard the Mermaids Singing* (1987) all incorporate the figure of the film screen or screen-like images to focus an interrogation of women's relationship to image production. Rather than postulate women as either totally coopted by or completely excluded from Hollywood, Mayne argues that these films employ and challenge narrative codes in a productive, ambivalent relationship with dominant cinema. Again, she situates the screen at the threshold, symbolizing inclusion and exclusion.

Early films sometimes placed women in the position of voyeur, peeking through a literal keyhole—another threshold—thus positing woman as looker as well as “to-be-looked-at.” In “Early Cinema and Women's Films,” the book's final section, Mayne analyzes both the development of codes of gender representation in early films and women filmmakers' appropriation of such “primitive” properties as lack of camera movement and close-ups, the conjuror character, and the dream scenario. She does not make a utopian connection between women's strategies of representation and the use of early techniques untainted by the Hollywood regime, but is concerned with how the “primitive” informs representations of traditional femininity in, for example, the dream structure of Maya Deren's *Meshes of the Afternoon* (1943), the heroine's fantasies in Germaine Dulac's *The Smiling Madame Beudet* (1922), or Chantal Akerman's use of stationary camera, medium long shots, and “real time” in *Jeanne Dielman* (1975). While as a term in film history “primitive” is more or less interchangeable with “early,” it is foregrounded throughout Mayne's text by quotation marks, for she is concerned to draw out, rather than erase, its ideological



**Tabea Blumenschein as the narcissistic lady drinker in  
Ulrike Ottinger's *Ticket of No Return*.**

Courtesy Basis-Film Verleih GmbH

connotations. She concludes with a discussion of Trinh T. Minh-ha's *Reassemblage* (1982) and Laleen Jayamanne's *A Song of Ceylon* (1985), films which critique the colonialist assumptions of anthropological discourse.

The book's preceding section on female authorship argues that this concept—explored so thoroughly in feminist literary criticism and obviously crucial to a definition of women's cinema—has been underexamined in contemporary film theory, since the specter of “essentialism” has rendered any mention of real authors and viewers suspect. Specifically, the section's two chapters address the inscription of a filmmaker's lesbian identity and desire in her films. Mayne discusses Dorothy Arzner, the only woman director of the classical Hollywood studio period, along with Chantal Akerman and Ulrike Ottinger, European feature filmmakers whose international *auteur* status has obscured (and been granted at the price of) an understanding of their work in lesbian terms.

In her most original and compelling chapter, Mayne turns feminist film theory on its head by looking at the field's symptomatic fascination with the figure of Dorothy Arzner. Mayne locates what she calls the filmmaker's “ironic lesbian signature” in two equally important but sometimes contradictory strands threaded through her films: the insistent, if marginal presence of “mannish” characters, as well as aspects of stance, gesture, and dress that carry lesbian connotations—what I'll call the gestural element; and the importance of communities of women. The gestural element, Mayne demonstrates, echoes Arzner's own unmistakably “butch” persona in photographs which have accompanied works of feminist film theory from

Claire Johnston's influential 1975 monograph on the filmmaker to a recent anthology edited by Constance Penley. Yet lesbianism, signified so insistently in the illustrations, is not discussed in these texts. Mayne further contends that although the “communities of women” theme in Arzner's work can be absorbed at the level of plot by inevitable heterosexual resolutions, the gestural element is inassimilable to classical narrative codes—or to existing theories of representation.

While I would not want to isolate any single key to *The Woman at the Keyhole*, it is to an emerging theory of lesbian representation that the book makes its most timely and radical contribution. In “Mistresses of Discrepancy,” Mayne examines films by Akerman and Ottinger that both seek to invent new cinematic forms appropriate to the representation of lesbianism and flirt with traditional psychoanalytic associations of lesbianism with narcissism and the preoedipal period. Mayne rereads the contradictions in Freud's sole case history of female homosexuality and scrutinizes Nancy Chodorow's model of female connectedness (based on the early mother/daughter bond), so influential in contemporary feminist thought, as effectively foreclosing the specificity of lesbianism. Drawing on writings by Luce Irigaray, Teresa de Lauretis, and Monique Wittig, Mayne's work suggests that it is not mere oversight that renders lesbianism invisible in film theory, nor homophobia in any simple sense. It is the very question of the *visibility* of lesbian desire in conventional terms that is at stake.

Mayne returns throughout to the feminist distinction between “woman”—functioning as a sign in patriarchal discourses such as cinema—and “women”—as social subjects, including women of color and lesbians, engaged in producing and reading cinematic images, who are thus bound up with the representation of “woman” and outside it. Mayne indicates that women's cinema cannot be seen as purely outside dominant traditions or, for that matter, the academy. Nor can it be effortlessly assimilated to established critical categories if feminist film theory is to avoid simply reproducing “woman.” Her book suggests that the very act of taking women's cinema as its object can transform the language of film theory and displace its most stubborn orthodoxies.

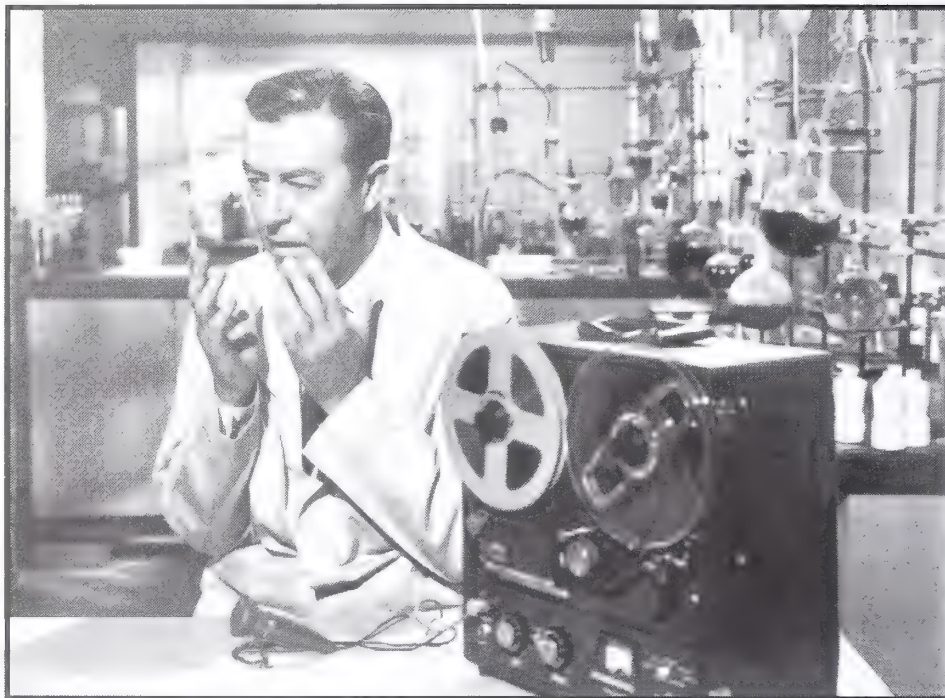
*Patricia White is a graduate student at the University of California, Santa Cruz.*



Judith Mayne reevaluates the work of Dorothy Arzner (right, with actress Billie Burke, best known as Glenda the Good Witch) in terms of the film director's lesbian persona.

Courtesy the Museum of Modern Arts, Film Still Archives





Ray Milland in Roger Corman's visionary film *The Man with the X-Ray Eyes*.

## CORMAN UNBOUND

ERNEST LARSEN

### How I Made a Hundred Movies in Hollywood and Never Lost a Dime

by Roger Corman, with Jim Jerome

New York: Random House, 1990; 241 pp.; \$18.95 (cloth)

What implications are we entitled to draw from the fact that the greatest Hollywood cheapskate director, Roger Corman, is not only the son of an engineer but graduated from Stanford in 1947 with a degree in Industrial Engineering, "a specialty that focused on efficiency and management"? According to a classmate, "He just breezed through with an incredible memory, great precision...and tremendous concentration." Such qualities, interestingly enough, overlap with capacities usually said to be desirable for a director of feature films.

Moviemaking may be the most glamorous industry in the US—but it's an industry nonetheless. Corman's rigorous and wholly successful application of his well-developed talents for on-the-spot problem-solving, as entertainingly documented in his book, inevitably renews the suspicion that directing in Hollywood is less an artistic practice than an inspirational mode of industrial engineering. Corman had the good luck to come on the scene at a moment—the early fifties—when the studio system, already unnerved by the House Un-American Activities Committee, was stumbling under the advance of television, the court-ordered break-up of the studio theater chains, and the middle-class sprint to the suburbs. The temporary paralysis of the industry left room for the cunning of the low-budget entrepreneur. Corman hooked onto the exploitation market, cutting a deal with the independent American International Pictures (AIP), not because he knew how to direct—he's very clear about the fact that his first five films were on-the-job training—but because he was speedy, efficient, and knew how to plan.

But there was a little more to it than that. Others, with more than a hint

of contempt, tended to see low-budget filmmaking as a constraint to true artistry but an excellent place to train for the big-budget spectacles down the yellow brick road. Although Corman could easily have sprinted in that direction, he quickly saw the primary advantage of remaining a cheapy helmer—as *Variety* would put it. He would always be shaping his films his way, rather than sweating to appease the big boys at the studios. He would have fewer toys to play with, but they would always be his toys. Sometimes it's not so easy to tell the difference between the rationality of the engineer and the obsessiveness of the artist. Both professions certainly attract control freaks. At any rate, Corman never let his cheapsters get too big for their britches, not only liberally hosing them down with humor, but carefully developing a style of working that suited his means: "I learned to react decisively when circumstances like weather imposed script or schedule changes. I tended to move the camera quite a lot from the beginning. And I tried, whenever possible, to frame shots with a interesting depth of field—placing objects or staging action from the foreground through the middle distances and out to the background. The elements of an individual style were taking shape—thorough preparation, a quick, disciplined pace on the set, a moving camera, a dense composition."

While AIP's insatiable need for product encouraged Corman to work in all the suitable genres, his goofiest and most memorable early films feature monsters—usually either uninvited visitors from a dying planet or the mutant residue of nuclear test radiation. No attempt was ever made to make such genetic misfits convincingly scary. These lumbering, laughably sympathetic beasts somehow seemed to be aware that they could never have gotten a job outside of a Corman film. For Corman the absurdity of their appearance amounted almost to a Brechtian advantage, encouraging audiences not to identify with but to jeer at Big Science, which was usually seen as the source of the comic apocalypse. Certainly, his scientist's obsessive rationalism to the point of madness could not be more effectively ridiculed than when one witnessed them squaring off against what looked like a giant pasteboard artichoke with attitude. The actors never seemed to notice how campy these creatures were, but the audience always did. Embarrassment slid away from the not-so-special effects to attach itself to a howling deflation of authoritarian institutions—particularly that most sacred of cows, Science.

Surely many wannabees will read Corman's autobiography in the Horatio Algerish mood that its ironically cheesy title invites. If so, one would hope that the starry-eyed will not be so blinded as to notice that, despite their approximation of the breezy tone required of the celeb bio, Corman and his collaborator structure their recreation of a life lived in the dream factory in cautionary, not celebratory terms. In fact, Corman, with the highly restrained ruefulness of a rationalist despite himself, mines nearly every apparently self-congratulatory anecdote with little explosive charges that note the palpable limits of the dream.

It is the utter folly of the pursuit of rationalism to its ultimate end that



forms the obsessive subject matter of many of Corman's films, from the early cheapsters *It Conquered the World* and *The Day the World Ended* to his recent return to directing, *Frankenstein Unbound*. Taken together these films develop an unexpectedly serious critique of the role Science, in the suspect company of the military, has taken in engineering the horrors of the modern world. An argument could be made that Corman, among all the directors of his generation, was the only one to notice Hiroshima. But then it's been said many times before that Hollywood is a world unto itself. If, however, it seems reasonable to view Hiroshima as the ultimate triumph of instrumental reason, then the essential landscape of Corman's films—the landscape that just about every other US director seems never to have set foot on—is the scene of nuclear holocaust.

While this is obvious in his monster movies, it's worth testing this proposition with the group of Corman's films that should seem least serviceable to the argument, the Poe films, which are most often seen as glorious exercises in formal control of color and mise-en-scène. Once the connection is made it's hard to see *The Masque of the Red Death*, for instance, as anything but a post-apocalyptic allegory. But what about *The Fall of the House of Usher*? An anecdote will do double-duty: definitively confirming the speculation above, as well as demonstrating Corman's highly conscious exploration of the deeply-rooted conflict he feels between the demands of reason and the pleasures of artistry.

We capitalized on luck. Or rather, on others' misfortunes. Directing sometimes means taking advantage of that kind of unforeseen occurrence. The one exterior at the outset of *Usher*—when Philip Winthrop rides his horse through woods to the castle—had to have a stark fantasy look. As “luck” would have it, there was a forest fire in the Hollywood Hills just as we were going into production.... The next day I went out to the hills with a skeleton crew, the second male lead, Mark Damon, and a horse. It was great. The ground was gray with ash; the trees were charred and black. And we threw a little fog in to add some effect. I got exactly what I wanted: to not show green grass, leafy trees, or any other organic signs of life. The film was about decay and madness. This was a great instance of being fast on your feet—a forest fire that had wrecked peoples' homes and the hills had provided a wonderful opening sequence.

The wacky inability of human beings to prevent themselves from going about their business in even the worst of circumstances is both deplored and celebrated here. The spectacle of survival seems to comprehend this contradiction for Corman. In their own deliriously and deliberately inadequate terms (for in what sense can anyone be said to be up to representing total destruction?) the Corman films seem to ask: If we have survived nuclear holocaust, how should we see ourselves—as human beings or as mutants? This question is never framed ponderously. When you work cheap you have to be both light and fast on your feet. Only those mutants with a sense of humor can survive in such an environment. You're not required to pretend you have any answers since your budget prohibits the spurious realism that somehow always seems to encourage or underwrite that particular error in judgment.

Following his experience with *Von Richthofen and Brown*, a World War I aerial dogfight movie, Roger Corman quit directing films for 20 years. For those of us who consider *The Man with X-Ray Eyes* one of the most visionary films ever made, this hiatus reckons as a loss comparable, say, to Sartre's failure ever to complete the second volume of *The Critique of Dialectical*

*Reason*. Here again, with *The Man with X-Ray Eyes*, Corman's dedication to cheapness paid off. He explains how he shot what is perhaps one of the most startling scenes in the film: “To create the effect of X seeing through buildings, I decided to shoot a building at varying stages of construction and to show it backwards.” The horror of seeing through the eyes of a demented scientist creates the effect of a world in which technical reason, suddenly stripped of its usual nutty alibi of sanity, literally destroys the world. Poof! In exploiting the metaphor of vision as knowledge, sight as active quest, sight as conqueror and destroyer, Corman exposes layer by layer how the processes of perception have implicated us, as well, as a more or less passive audience, viewing the constructed world as a given instead of an endless layering of fictions, even if they are as substantial as concrete and steel girders. This perception affords one an oddly liberating sense of the fragility of the world around us, a conviction that it can all be destroyed in the blink of an eye.

Here again, Corman's technique doesn't attempt to approximate perfection. To stop short of perfection in order to get a good job done quickly is to some degree antithetical to our received notions of artistry. For Corman, this is tied to his decision to quit directing. Instead of taking the time to explain that extraordinary decision in his autobiography, Corman cuts, as he does in his films, to the action: an extended account of his brilliant problem-solving in directing the aerial sequences in *Von Richthofen and Brown*. Since this decision ranks as one of the major turning points in US film history, surely it's worth our while to examine what Corman is really telling us while pretending merely to spin out yet another chattily ironic anecdote.

Corman regales us with an enactment of what is probably the hoariest clichéd image in his profession: the always inflatable category of movie director as battlefield general. He erects “a thirty-foot wooden tower on top of the highest hill in this section of the Irish countryside” and from that vantage point proceeds to shoot three dogfights at the same time. Using



Corman's not-so-special effects include a papier-mâché beast in *Attack of the Crab Monsters*.



# BOOK REVIEWS

Theory, popular culture, and politics are interwoven in *Indiscretions'* discussion of such film and video works as Cecelia Condit's *Possibly in Michigan*.

Courtesy Women Make Movies

planes from the sixties epics *Darling Lili* and *The Blue Max*, Corman manages in two weeks to get aerial shots it tooks months to get in those films. It's true that I'm writing this only a few days into the Desert Storm ceasefire—and that therefore I may still be mesmerized by the noble achievements of a high-tech air war that managed (also in a few short, shining weeks) to kill tens of thousands of Iraqis—but there's something to the visceral appeal of this image of the brigadier director. Certainly, Corman, who not inaccurately characterizes himself as a pro-feminist, left-liberal maverick—the prototype Hollywood independent, who, like a B-movie bush pilot, took all the chances and reaped all the rewards—is more than vaguely aware of the contradictions of his psychic investment in this image. In fact he ends his book with this reflection:

I've thought that the Baron von Richthofen, the proud, fearless aristocrat in a passing age of warfare, and Roy Brown, the nervous factory worker with superior reflexes and cunning who shoots him out of the skies in World War One, both reflect "warring" aspects of my character: the elitist-artist and the hustler-maverick destined to defeat him. Those two characters, in a way, sum up my view of Hollywood and the culture of film: It's a compromised art form. It's a 50-50 split, art and commerce. Maybe that's why Americans are so good at it. In a time when American industry is falling behind other countries, the American film industry is by far the most successful in the world. That's what we're good at, art and commerce, compromised.

In any case, one day the owner of the period planes shows up on the set. He's taken note of Corman's ingenious methods and has cut a deal to direct aerial sequences for another war film. Corman tries to warn him off, but he isn't going for it. Later that same day the man is killed when he calls in his planes at the wrong time and they collide with the helicopter he's in. Still later in the day it goes out on the radio that the crash has "killed four or five people—including the director—connected to a World War One flying picture." Everyone assumes that Corman is dead. And Corman the hustler takes the once in a lifetime opportunity to kill off Corman the director.

Rising from the ashes, the new bird marries, feathers the nest, and raises a brood of little chicks. Along the way, amplifying his talents for industrial engineering, his production company, New World, repopulates Hollywood with an entire generation of fledgling directors and producers (Coppola, Demme, Scorsese, etc.), whose gratitude to the great cheapskate is expressed in numerous anecdotal testimonials that pad the book. Despite his accomplishments as a producer and a developer of talent, Corman devotes little of his book to those years. Nevertheless, his autobiography, from its self-parodying, crass title to its last words—"the monster wins"—is a cautionary allegory on the inevitable fate of the independent filmmaker sucked into the gaping maw of industrial production. As such, it should be studied closely by the presently rising generation of independent filmmakers. With a Luciferian logic, Corman clearly believes that an unconsidered embrace of technology can only end in screwing the filmmaker right to the wall. He never forgot that the toys he played with on that phallic tower in Ireland turned out to be weapons.

*Ernest Larsen is a writer and video producer who has recently published articles in Transition and Jump Cut.*



## DOUBLE EXPOSURE

BILL HARRIGAN

### **Indiscretions: Avant-Garde Film, Video, and Feminism**

by Patricia Mellencamp

Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990; 256 pp.; \$29.95 (cloth), \$12.95 (paper)

### **Logics of Television: Essays in Cultural Criticism**

edited by Patricia Mellencamp

Bloomington: Indiana University Press/London: BFI Publishing, 1990; 320 pp.; \$35.00 (cloth), \$14.95 (paper)

With respect to *Indiscretions* and *Logics of Television*, two books bearing a 1990 copyright, the reviewing conceit would be one acknowledging the adept double-play finessed by Patricia Mellencamp, author of the former and editor of the latter. It's an estimable achievement, producing these books, singly or in tandem. What's particularly interesting is how *Indiscretions* (subtitled *Avant-Garde Film, Video, and Feminism*) turns in the direction of various allied cultural phenomena virtually invisible within the culture at large, while *Logics of Television*—the title tells it—confronts the institution that has virtually transformed-by-devouring any hope for a "culture at large."

*Indiscretions* makes most sense if it's approached as a chronicle—as one woman's adventures in teaching the avant garde. I say this to advance the book, not to diminish it—or, at any rate, to acknowledge the book's cheery refusal to speak a quieting last word. According to Mellencamp, her task is to "consider some effects on avant-garde film and video of the collision/collusion with contemporary theory." The historical terrain is briskly grazed, starting with remarks on the New American Cinema circa 1960, leading then to the reign of "visionary film," from there to the displacements provoked by the emergence of video, concluding within (or at least not far enough out from) the paradigm of the dreaded but irresistible postmodernism.

It's a reasonable trajectory as far as it goes, strengthened certainly by the critical feminist regard that provides the author's truest, most instinctive voice—a voice, in any case, necessary to speak with authority on the book's parallel narrative of "the move, for women, from the late 1960s and 1970s paradoxes of 'sexual liberation'...to the 1980s recognition of female subjectivity...a shift from being a desirable, supportive object to becoming a speaking subject, artist or writer."

Two qualifications, however, the first, more minor, which Mellencamp acknowledges but inadequately addresses. This has to do with the range of





film and video work on which she comments. In the prologue, there is the following, arguably logical, statement:

I have left out analyses of many films and videos which I have studied in detail for the simple reason of presumed unfamiliarity as well as the current fashion of criticism: metaphorical proclamation about the state of culture, supported by brief, wide-ranging citations as documented assertions, rather than detailed, textual explication is the postmodern, academic style.

What does this statement mean in relation to *Indiscretions*? Presumably Mellencamp is not aligning herself with the tendency favoring "metaphorical proclamation...and wide-ranging citations as documented assertions." Is that the "current fashion of criticism"? Assuming it is, why submit to it as the sole excuse for omitting "analyses of many films and videos"? Perhaps I am misreading (in the old, not the new, sense: I just don't get it). In any case, using a reader's "presumed unfamiliarity" with object or text or event as the alibi for not discussing it is, to say the least, a dubious rationale for explaining the range of a study's references, especially any study hoping to recalibrate the historical record. This is, I admit, a no-win situation: either aim for completeness and be castigated for the inevitable (human) omissions, or else decide to be openly selective and then be damned not for who has been named but for who has been altogether unnamed. I only wish Mellencamp had been a bit more enlightening, not so much on those few she writes about in depth as on the material context in which they function—a context the discussion of which would perforce bring others' work, others' practices, into light.

The second qualification relates to the first, and that is that the notion of "avant garde" (and, for that matter, "feminism") Mellencamp endorses or exemplifies, while by no means uncritically taken up, is at the same time extremely partial. As a glance at the index indicates, the book's theoretical masters are Lyotard, Baudrillard, Lacan, and Barthes. I am not ready to dismiss the work of these individuals, as academic personality Camille Paglia recently did in a *New York Times* article, characterizing them as "ninnies, pedants, and tyrants...who must be driven from our shores." That said, it must also be noted that an avant garde constructed and bolstered by this version of continental theorizing as it's mined and processed by US academics is going to be (at any rate, it is) devoid of any real engagement with issues of race, gender, and politics except in the most globally abstracted senses. Which again raises the questions: which avant garde? whose avant garde?

Most people might agree that as a term, avant garde should always be suspended within quotation marks, to indicate a suspicious, conditional relationship to it, and to acknowledge that it's never a static, homogeneous construct. Even so, the avant garde sketched in *Indiscretions* is overwhelmingly "disengaged," except in its confrontations with "theory," a charge Mellencamp preemptively addresses by saying that "it is a mistaken impression that theory, or ideology has nothing to do with real life." Of course it has a relation to real life; as a cognitive activity undertaken by

## BOOK REVIEWS

William Wegman (and Man Ray) are among the subjects of study in Mellencamp's feminist analysis of avant-garde film and video.

Courtesy Video Data Bank

human beings, it has as much a relation to real life as anything else. The question is whether it's a relation more privileged than, say, engaging in action or debate about some of the material conditions of functioning in the world.

It's a question that has to be asked before it can be answered. *Indiscretions* doesn't do that, but it does other things: The book communicates with some enthusiasm and wit the enchantment visited upon the author by a number of films and videos. But it also advances a parabolic avant garde that, if it were universal decree, would have a lot to answer for come the day when those few chosen were separated from the many who were merely called. It depends, I guess, on what calendar you consult.

The subtitle of the *Logics of Television* anthology, *Essays in Cultural Criticism*, hints at the plurality of viewpoints providing the book with its most useful strength. The 13 essays have been drawn from a series of seminars held by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's Center for Twentieth Century Studies in 1987-88 and represent a variety of the footholds academic critics are securing on the face of television. None of the essays takes to categorical closure, opting instead to mime (willfully? "pathetically"? ) the vaunted protean openness of the object itself.

As in *Indiscretions*, Mellencamp articulates some of the book's qualifications and omissions, but here, judging by the eventual cumulative effect of the consistently provocative essays, those disclaimers seem much less dubious. This has to do in part with the essayists' assumption of cultural studies rather than film theory as the proper provenance for inquiries into television and the minds of its consumers. Still, as Mellencamp notes, the book's emphases (e.g., on US television to the virtual exclusion of foreign TV) and omissions (of alternative television practices and questions of racial representations) are openly laid out, and the analytical examples the book's essays provide can presumably be built upon to extend into these and other areas.

And yet. What both these books demonstrate, at once wittingly and not, is an embrace of a certain insularity, almost of a certain luxury, by no means peculiar to academic criticism of film and video. Indeed, relative to what passes for radical commentary in some other academic disciplines, that which emerges from film and video think tanks could probably be construed as a blueprint for revolution. But what's symptomatic, finally, about both books—in their particulars, each is useful and generous in its way—is that their profound absence of political awareness (except in the register of "theory," where sing voices too ethereal to be heard off-campus) is simply noted, as though this absence were no more consequential or incriminating than a breach (in the register of "theory") of scholarly *etiquette*—as though the recondite issues of race, sexuality, dispossession, and power were among the optional essay questions best left to overachievers and fanatics. Mellencamp's books solicit the reader's forbearance on these issues, but it's a forbearance granted at a drastic price. So much for the fear of "tenured radicals" storming the gates. Voltaire: "What century are we living in?"

In memory of Dennis Giles

Bill Horrigan is media curator at the Wexner Center for the Arts in Columbus, Ohio, and recently organized *AIDS: An Issue of Representation* for the Gallery Association of New York State.



# BOOK REVIEWS

The suppressed history of Japanese in Canada is reconstructed by the women of one family in Mido Onodera's fictionalized narrative *The Displaced View*, included in *Yellow Peril: Reconsidered*.

Courtesy Women Make Movies

## VISIONS OF AN ASIAN NEW WORLD

VALERIE SOE

### **Yellow Peril: Reconsidered**

edited by Paul Wong

Vancouver: On Edge, 1990; 72 pp.; \$20.00; (available from On Edge: #201-431 Pacific Blvd., Vancouver, BC V6B 5M6, Canada)

Because of Canada's geographic and cultural proximity to the United States, it's tempting to try to compare the Asian Canadian experience with that of Asians living in the US. There is, of course, a danger in drawing too many parallels between US and Canadian Asian communities—not the least is the inclination to discount Canada's distinct and particular historical milieu. However, shared issues and concerns exist when any oppressed minority group struggles for sovereignty within a hegemonic social structure. *Yellow Peril: Reconsidered*, the catalogue for an exhibition of the same name, points out the common themes of self-determination, identity, and perception common to many people of color in North America.

Curated by Paul Wong, videomaker and programmer for Vancouver's artist-run video exhibition and distribution organization Video In/Video Out, the exhibition toured across Canada in 1990 and 1991. Wong has also been involved in organizing two previous exhibitions concentrating on films, videotapes, and photography by Asians in Canada and the US: *Asian New World*, presented at Video In in 1987, and *Yellow Peril: New World Asians*, which was shown in London in 1988. This third section of the series attempts to broaden the range of its predecessors and in doing so puts forth a wide scope of works from a relatively young and narrowly focused field, testifying to the vitality and energy of Asian Canadian media artists.

The organizers have included media work and essays from producers working on everything from historical documentaries to personal creative visions, with the producers' Asian Canadian origins providing the only common thread. According to the catalogue's preface, "Neither the publication nor the exhibition define, or attempt to pigeonhole, emerging ideas into narrow frameworks. The inclusion of formalist, didactic, expressionistic and community-oriented works attest to the plurality of visions." Here the exhibition's organizers reiterate that such a diverse community requires an openness and latitude of vision in order clearly to articulate its many concerns.

Included in the catalogue are six essays covering a range of topics relevant to Asian Canadians. In his introductory essay, Wong relates the reasons for the exhibition, among which are the historic oppression of Asian Canadians, the lack of avenues for Asian Canadian voices of dissent, and divisions and differences among the many ethnic groups labelled Asian in Canada. Wong is careful to note the diversity of backgrounds among the artists included, while pointing out concerns in their work shared with other artists of color, such as visibility, self-determination, and self-articulation,



as well as the preservation and celebration of a distinct heritage and history. As Wong states, "We can see similar sensibilities at play and at work, we can start to see and to understand the differences."

Wong also stresses the recognition of the Asian Canadian voice. "There is an Asian Canadian sensibility, there is an Asian Canadian contemporary art, there is an Asian Canadian photo, film and video community," he emphatically claims, once again emphasizing the importance of the community's discrete vision, exhibited in the multiple treatments and themes found in the 25 works included in the exhibition.

The remaining essays provide an invaluable history of Asian Canadian media arts, creating a framework around which to view the visual arts in the second portion of the publication. In "Neither Guests nor Strangers," Larissa Lai and Jean Lum of the Asian Canadian Writers' Group discuss the concerns of a community attempting to provide an alternative to the dominant culture, without benefit of funding, official recognition, or support. While acknowledging the significance of independent Asian Canadian media, the current picture Lai and Lum present is glum: "We have to struggle harder to receive less. It continues to be white mandarins who decide what constitutes our culture and what does not." Because of this continued imbalance of power, Asian Canadian artists have had continually to update their strategies.

Recognizing the ever-changing aspect of racism, Monika Kin Gagnon in "Belonging in Exclusion" advocates a more radical approach to resisting oppression. Her essay begins by recounting the institutionalized racism historically faced by Asian Canadians as manifested in various laws enacted to prohibit individual liberties for those of Asian descent. Among these were an 1886 discretionary head tax levied only on Chinese immigrants, starting at \$50 and subsequently raised to \$500 in 1904, a 1923 Chinese Immigration Act prohibiting Chinese immigration, and the World War II internment of Japanese Canadians. In searching for an effective strategy for opposing this systematic persecution, Gagnon states, "Without privileging marginality, so as to ascribe too much power to the centre, how can identities of in-between cultures be asserted? Nothing less than to locate a space of belonging within the violence of exclusion." Her observation acknowledges the need for innovative approaches to confronting bias and racism.

In dealing with this racism one of the strengths of the Asian Canadian community is its great diversity, an attribute noted by Richard Fung in his essay "Multiculturalism Reconsidered." Although there is relatively limited media production within the Asian Canadian community, Fung observes that this provides the opportunity for a multiplicity of perspectives. "Because so few films and videotapes come out of an Asian Canadian experience, there is enormous scope for projects," he claims, adding, "There is room for innovation in every form and on any subject matter." Fung also



stresses the importance of Asian Canadians themselves articulating the topics of discourse within their community. "We must ensure that our agenda is not determined by a simple reaction to the stereotypes others have of us. We need to situate and question ourselves as *subjects*. Not only how we are seen but how *we* see. We must center our work on our own problems, desires and foibles." By example, Fung's *Chinese Characters*, which is included in the exhibition, explores the concerns of gay Asian males operating in a racist, sexist culture.

In "A Displaced View: What Are We Reconsidering about the Yellow Peril?," Midi Onodera (*The Displaced View*) also underscores the importance of Asian Canadian self-definition. She notes, "Criticism by well-informed, well-intentioned white critics tells us mainstream beliefs, but it does not tell us what we mean. We must begin this process of comprehension ourselves."

In her essay she also ironically notes the opportunities and dangers presented by the dominant culture's belated recognition of multiculturalism, stating, "It may now be considered an asset 'to be of colour.'" However, in noting the spectre of tokenism that accompanies this grudging awareness, Onodera observes that "since the number of films and videos produced by people of colour is still relatively small, there is intense pressure and responsibility imposed on the designated artist. The community pressure, as a 'visible minority' and as a member of a specific ethnic group, can be overwhelming." Warning against the danger of such undue pressure she states, "We must give our developing media artists a chance to experiment without elevating them to where they can be shot down."

Onodera's emphasis on the "process of comprehension" reiterates the central conceit of *Yellow Peril: Reconsidered*—that people of color must define their own perspectives and issues, rather than allow the dominant culture to dictate the boundaries of discourse. In this, the publication *Yellow Peril: Reconsidered* illuminates yet another aspect of the ongoing process of the self-definition and self-articulation of marginalized communities. Here the Asian Canadian media community contributes to the body of work that understands and asserts the importance of finding a voice and a culture emerging from within itself, rather than one imposed by outside observers.

Valerie Soe is an artist and writer living in San Francisco. Her work includes the videotapes *All Orientals Look the Same* and *Black Sheep*.

## MISSING IN ACTION

ROB EDELMAN

### **From Hanoi to Hollywood: The Vietnam War in American Film**

edited by Linda Dittmar and Gene Michaud

New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 1990; 387 pp.; \$45.00 (cloth), \$14.95 (paper)

One would not expect a biography of Errol Flynn or a history of silent film



A Chicano Vietnam vet is inwardly torn when training contras in Haskell Wexler's *Latino*, a film given only fleeting reference in *From Hanoi to Hollywood*.

Courtesy National Film Theatre

comedy or a survey of Soviet cinema to focus on any aspect of the US independent film. However, independent works of all lengths and types do have their niche in cinema history. And that niche need not be ghettoized: Writings on independent films should in no way be limited to volumes devoted solely to the subject.

An analysis of the manner in which the sixties anti-Vietnam War generation has aged on celluloid should feature as much, if not more, John Sayles' *The Return of the Secaucus 7* as Lawrence Kasdan's *The Big Chill*. Joan Micklin Silver's *Between the Lines* also should be a key title in the survey. Clearly, an overview of the Vietnam War on celluloid must feature extensive coverage of *Apocalypse Now*, *Platoon*, *Full Metal Jacket*, *Coming Home*, *The Deer Hunter*, and the *Rambo* films. But other, equally compelling, often far more progressive views of the war have been conveyed in independently-produced features, not to mention in scores of documentaries.

Thus, the title *From Hanoi to Hollywood: The Vietnam War in American Film* is a misnomer. Not all US movies with Vietnam motifs originate in Hollywood. This is acknowledged in the book's thorough filmography, which lists features from 1948's *Rogue's Regiment* to 1988's *Running on Empty*, and documentaries from 1961's *Eyewitness: Diem's War—or Ours?* to 1989's *Disobeying Orders: GI Resistance in the Vietnam War*. Indeed, the latter titles serve as bookends for evolving attitudes toward the war in the US.

The 19 essays in *From Hanoi to Hollywood* are the products of a three-day conference on "The War Film: Contexts and Images," held at the University of Massachusetts in 1988. All are scholarly, thoughtful analyses of aspects of the war as presented in specific Vietnam films. In this regard, the volume succeeds in the general aim articulated by editors Linda Dittmar and Gene Michaud: "In adding our voices to the debate over the lessons to



be drawn from the Vietnam War, it is our hope to provide new ways of 'seeing' the representations of that conflict, and that this process will in turn result in a fuller understanding of the past and positive action in the future."

But for independent filmmakers, the question remains: How do their "representations of that conflict" fare in this volume when placed within the historical analysis of the Vietnam film genre? Certainly, they are not completely excluded. *From Hanoi to Hollywood* does contain an essay titled "Night of the Living Dead: A Horror Film about the Horrors of the Vietnam Era." In the book's introductory essay, *Ashes and Embers* is cited along with *Coming Home* and *Cutter's Way* as films which "use Vietnam veterans to unmask the racist, economic and patriarchal institutions that sustained a war they clearly encode as unjustifiable." It also is astutely and correctly pointed out that, unlike *Coming Home*, *Ashes and Embers*—the independent film—and *Cutter's Way*—the major studio feature whose distribution was mishandled—"are seldom included in the 'canon' of Vietnam films."

But, independent-wise, the breadth and scope of *From Hanoi to Hollywood* is deficient. *Ashes and Embers*, directed by Haile Gerima, is unique if only because its focus is entirely on a black Vietnam veteran. Gerima examines the manner in which the character grows to understand the experience of Vietnam and its similarities to the experience of African-Americans. In *Latino*, Haskell Wexler details the plight of and conflict within a Chicano Green Beret who fought in Vietnam and finds himself "advising" the contras doing battle in Nicaragua. Both films deserve far more than passing references and all-too-brief analyses.

Within the satire depicted by Brian De Palma in *Greetings* and *Hi, Mom!*, there is an authentic late-sixties counterculture ambience that could not be conjured up in a Hollywood feature. Furthermore, Robert De Niro plays a character who is at once fascinating and consistently ignored in surveys of celluloid Vietnam veterans. In the first film, he is drafted and sent off to war; he returns home in the second as a comically looney anarchist. Beyond their inclusion in the filmography, both films receive nary a mention in the book.

A couple of other films also worthy of extended analysis are Gordon Davidson's *The Trial of the Catonsville Nine*, a courtroom drama about Baltimore anti-war protestors on trial for burning draft records, which examines the war from a point of view that has practically been ignored on celluloid; and Steven Miller's *Sons*, with a cast that includes nonprofessional actors who are actual Vietnam veterans. For this reason alone, the film—about a baby boomer who grew up with a "track record of being a winner" and who then went to Vietnam where he lost an arm and his belief in the American Dream—is crammed with an emotional honesty rarely found these days in Hollywood movies.

Of the more than 180 documentaries listed in the filmography, the focus of the text devoted to documentary images of the war is essentially on a mere trio: Peter Davis' *Hearts and Minds*, Emile de Antonio's *In the Year of the Pig* and Bill Couturie's *Dear America: Letters Home from Vietnam*. But myriad other titles, too numerous to mention here, are worthy of extended examination in the space of a book on Vietnam cinema.

Interestingly enough, Dittmar and Michaud readily acknowledge these omissions. They write, "In particular, we would have liked to include close readings of narrative films that are not the products of the major Hollywood



Tom Taylor, a Vietnam vet and the lead actor in Steven Miller's *Sons*, provides an emotional honesty missing from Hollywood's renditions of the war.

Courtesy filmmaker

studios. Among these are *The Trial of the Catonsville Nine*...*Ashes and Embers*...and a great number of independently produced documentaries such as *Requiem 29*.... Even certain important but less publicized mainstream Hollywood films did not receive the attention they deserve." The editors then add, "Calling attention to what does and does not enter the 'canon' of films about the Vietnam War, we argue for critical engagement that questions our own priorities as viewers, writers, and readers. That the work within these pages most often concerns mainstream films says much about the way the commercial film industry sets the agenda for scholarship."

But where is it written that "the commercial film industry sets the agenda for scholarship"? Should not scholars and historians set this agenda? Simply stated, why were *The Trial of the Catonsville Nine*, *Ashes and Embers*, and *Requiem 29* not more extensively covered in *From Hanoi to Hollywood*? Admittedly, the oversights in this survey exist not out of ignorance. But while Sylvester Stallone's *Rambo* may be the seminal celluloid-fantasy portrait of the Vietnam veteran, he has already been dissected (and dissected again) in the media, a phenomenon revealed in the extensive list of writings cited at the end of the two essays devoted to the character. Why *two* chapters on *Rambo* and none on any number of other films, whether fiction features or documentaries, independents or such mainstream productions as *Go Tell the Spartans*, or even such potboilers as *Stanley*, a 1972 low-budget feature whose Vietnam-vet-as-psycho-hero would make a fascinating subject for analysis?

Independent filmmakers have generally attempted to take serious, critical looks at the Vietnam War and its aftermath, rather than exploit the war for escapist purposes or, as in the case of the *Rambo* series, Chuck Norris' *Missing in Action* films, *Uncommon Valor*, and *The Hanoi Hilton*, play into audience emotions by rewriting the Vietnam history book. Primarily, these films perpetuate a false view of the outcome of the war. In *The Hanoi Hilton*, it is implied that because POW Michael Moriarty survives his ordeal as a captive of the North Vietnamese, he is a winner. As the film concludes in the aftermath of the Paris peace talks, Moriarty and his fellow POWs cheer wildly as they are about to embark on a plane heading home. Meanwhile, the North Vietnamese—the "losers"—sit by coldly, passively.

In the other films, it is alleged that the war really hasn't ended—just send Sylvester Stallone, Gene Hackman, or Chuck Norris back to Vietnam, kick some commie butt and liberate a few MIAs. The Reds will fall like "redskins" in a John Wayne western; America will be proud, regain its honor, actually, incredibly, "win" the war. You won't find this type of mythology in the Vietnam independents. If they are not given more than passing acknowledgement in volumes like *From Hanoi to Hollywood*, then where will they be covered?

Rob Edelman is a contributing editor of Leonard Maltin's TV Movies and Video Guide and director of programming of Home Film Festival.



## GEECHEE GIRL GOES HOME

Julie Dash on *Daughters of the Dust*

DEBORAH THOMAS  
AND CATHERINE SAALFIELD

Although the work of African American women filmmakers has remained virtually unacknowledged, Julie Dash has consistently produced films that explore the struggles of black women in the US. In each of her 10 projects, she introduces new models for representation of this perennially underrepresented group while reformulating

in the Sea Islands off the Georgia coast. Tension builds in the 113-minute film as the younger members of the extended Peazant family prepare for their migration "up North," leaving their difficult and isolated, but familiar and relatively autonomous rural life for the potential prosperity offered by the mainland's industrialized culture. Unlike *Illusions*, which intentionally mimics a forties Hollywood feature—black and white film stock, a linear script, and snappy dialogue—to elaborate and propel the storyline, *Daughters* borrows a traditional West African approach to recounting a tale. Dash asserts, "All stories don't need to be told in a Western way. We have the genres down pat. It's incumbent upon us to challenge and stretch the norm."

In *Daughters*, not only does Dash question formal conventions but she also examines a community that was never considered an apt subject for feature filmmaking. Rather than take her cues from the mass media, however, she relied on her own ancestry in conceiving *Daughters*—specifically her father's family, which is from Charleston with roots in the Sea Islands. "But they didn't like to admit that they had relatives on the islands," Dash remembers. "For a long time, it was an insult to be Gullah or Geechee, because it was so closely associated with African ties. It meant you were ignorant, you had a strange accent, you practiced magic." Dash observes that her father's generation was "trying to assimilate." In making *Daughters*, then, Dash found means to "recollect, recall, and remember," words she ascribes to the film's narrator, the Unborn Child.

The story that unfolds in *Daughters* centers on the women of the Peazant family. Nana, the 88-year-old matriarch and the carrier of African heritage, resists the migration and fights to keep her children together, meeting hostile opposition from Hagar, who married into the family and now seeks to distance herself and her children from Sea Island customs. On the day of a farewell picnic, Nana's granddaughters Viola and Yellow Mary return from the mainland, bringing with them companions who represent aspects of modernity. Viola's friend, Mr. Snead, is one of the talented tenth, a citified anthropologist and photographer whom Viola has commissioned to document the family's last moments as a community on the island. Yellow Mary's companion seems a more enigmatic character, and the friendship between the two women suggests a romantic involvement. Meanwhile, another granddaughter, Eula, has been



In *Daughters of the Dust*, Julie Dash recollects her African and Geechee heritage using a traditional West African approach to storytelling.

Photo: Floyd Webb, courtesy Geechee Girls Productions

modes of narrative filmmaking. And her latest film, the feature-length *Daughters of the Dust*, may earn her the recognition she deserves.

Shot by A.J. Fielder, *Daughters* won first prize for Best Cinematography in a Dramatic Film at the Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah, last January. *Daughters* is the second segment of a projected four-part series on US black women at key historical junctures. The series was initiated with Dash's 1983 film *Illusions*, which portrays the complicated issues of "passing" and gender in a story of a woman who works in a Hollywood studio during World War II. One of the series' two subsequent films will take place in the sixties, and the other will be a futuristic fiction occurring beyond the year 2000.

In contrast, the period setting of *Daughters of the Dust* is the turn of the century on Ibo Landing, a former port of entry for newly enslaved Africans



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raped by a white landowner, and her husband Eli is tormented by the possibility that the Unborn Child she carries is the rapist's and not his own. Ultimately, Eula's pregnancy serves as a metaphor for the larger issues of cultural rape and violation.

Dash sees the film as primarily concerning "the fear of going away from home and not being able to come back," the fear of abandoning one's culture and, therefore, losing the foundation of one's identity. While the Christianized Viola uses her visit as an opportunity to extend her missionary work, trying to bestow her enlightenment upon backward heathens, Mr. Snead finds himself more enlightened by the visit. In the process of his very serious and objective documentation of the Peasant family's migration, he gets entangled in what is perhaps his first personal contact with his own African roots. Yellow Mary, on the other hand, already "knows that the mainland is not all it's cracked up to be," says Dash. After having worked as a wet nurse and prostitute to support herself, she faces castigation from some of the women. "Her money and independence give her power which makes her dangerous, disliked, and feared," she explains. "They're jealous because she travels, she knows more than they do." Unexpectedly, however, Yellow Mary chooses to stay with Nana when the boat shoves off with her companion on it. Whereas it appears that Yellow Mary has brought her lover home to meet the family, the woman is excluded from the explicit and acceptable bonds of blood and marriage. Furthermore, Dash explains, "The companion needs to go home, too, to Nova Scotia."

By means of the characters' interwoven voices and the repetitious layering of images, Dash creates a collage of perspectives, "Because that's the way I think." This effect, supported by idiosyncratic, often lush photography as well as a conceptually varied score, allows *Daughters* to proceed at a contemplative pace. Without many stylistic

precedents, Dash challenges her audience to sustain a level of engagement unusual in a culture where the pace of MTV and advertising set the standard. "I tell the story the way an African griot would tell a family history," she comments. Reacting to these techniques, reviewers have dubbed her an "anti-informationalist." Reluctant to appreciate this mode of expression, some critics have labelled the film "nonlinear." Dash replies, "I don't really see it that way, because these are all experiences that the characters have shared. Repetition is not necessarily repetitive. Black people like to say things one way, then another way, then another way. That's the way we worked [on *Daughters*], until we got to the end of what we wanted to say."

Originally, Dash conceived of *Daughters* as a silent movie. "I wanted a very visual film, memories recalled from the past, floating in a time continuum. You get more out of it once you leave the theater and it comes back to you than when you're waiting for it to connect." However, when she embarked on production, American Playhouse—the film's major funder—pressured Dash to include dialogue, "to make the film accessible to more people." Nevertheless, although Playhouse staff made suggestions after screening a series of rough cuts, Dash retained aesthetic and editorial control.

Although they provided \$800,000—the bulk of production and postproduction support necessary to complete the project—American Playhouse entered the picture after a long and difficult process familiar to most independent producers. Two years ago, Geechee Girls Productions, Dash's company, marshalled a few small grants and a minimal crew to make an impressive trailer. The trailer then attracted funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the National Black Programming Consortium, in addition to Playhouse. With the ambitious 35mm production now finished, distri-



"I wanted a very visual film, memories recalled from the past, floating in a time continuum," says Dash.

Photo: Floyd Webb, courtesy Geechee Girls Productions

bution for *Daughters* still remains elusive, although American Playhouse will air the film in the future. Dash believes that her latest work may face some difficulties because of its emphasis on black women's perspectives. "Most women tend to really like the film. Men have little, if any, patience with it because it has to do with women, first, and black women, second. It's a double whammy."

Given the obstacles that Dash has encountered, she remains optimistic about the success of her work and committed to the messages it imparts. Noting that "there are so many other black women filmmakers," Dash insists, "It's not important to me to be known or recognized as the flavor of the month. I'm thinking about the big picture, about history, and about making an impact in cinema, about making a statement that will last." Furthermore, Dash is clear not only about the difference between her work and the mainstream but about how her films differ from those of other African American directors. "What we've been exposed to is the work of black men," she says, lamenting the underexposure of black women filmmakers, especially in light of recent box office successes by black men. But she takes pleasure in the attention her colleague Charles Burnett has received. "He's sensitive," she says, "not in a rush to be part of Hollywood cinema, not trying to entertain, but making his own kinds of films."

In refusing to conform to the expectations bred by Hollywood entertainments and insisting on making *her* own kind of film, Julie Dash offers important reflections on cinematic representations of American history—and suggests new directions for the future. For example, in the final scene of *Daughters of the Dust*, Hagar's daughter Iona flees on a horse with her Native American lover just as the boat bearing her family departs for the mainland. In this sequence, Dash acknowledges the fact of mixed ancestry and, at the same time, invents imagery lacking in her own experience: "I always wanted to see a black woman riding off into the sunset. Everyone else got to ride off into the sunset except black women."

Deborah Thomas has written for the Village Voice and Emerge Magazine. She performs with Urban Bush Women, a dance-theater company which recently collaborated with Julie Dash on Praise House, a performance piece filmed for the PBS series *Alive from Off Center*. Catherine Saalfeld is a AIDS activist, videomaker, and writer who worked as the second-second assistant director for Praise House.



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## RENEE TAJIMA

In a new collaborative project, Jon Moritsugu and Jacques Boyreau are codirecting and coproducing **Hippy Porn**, a feature-length 16mm film. With Liz Canning as its star, set, scenic, and costume designer, the \$12,000 film centers around three nihilistic teenagers attending a prestigious university in a decaying western civilization. A soundtrack album featuring the music of numerous underground rock bands is scheduled for release by an independent New York City record label. *Hippy Porn*: Apathy Prods, 1830 Lawton St., San Francisco, CA 94122; (415) 566-8278.

Based in the nation's capitol, A.C. Warden and Alix Litwick are producing a five-part video series on the religious right's attacks on abortion clinics. **Stand Up for Choice**, designed to educate and train abortion rights activists across the country, began in 1989 as part of a clinic defense strategy. When 8,000 members of Operation Rescue descended on Washington, D.C., a group of independent film- and videomakers documented the anti-abortionists' attempt to teach "rescue" tactics and close down five local clinics. The producers plan to continue documenting such attacks and have already made rough-cuts available to women's organizations. They are still seeking camera crews, postproduction facilities,



Roll over, Andy Warhol. *Hippy Porn* has completed production, directed by Jon Moritsugu and Jacques Boyreau and starring Liz Canning as M.

Photo Lizanne Skyler, courtesy filmmakers

*My Fathers Died*. This 20-minute 16mm film tells the story of Aziya Williams and Malcolm Davidson, two young African American artists

supplies; and donations. *Stand Up for Choice Video Project*: Cherchez La Femme Productions, Box 29490, Washington, DC 20017; (202) 529-6569.

**In Here to Stay: Young Immigrants from El Salvador**, three young Salvadorans relate their experiences of leaving their war-torn country and making a new life in the US. Shot in Washington, D.C., home to one of the largest Salvadoran communities in the country, the 28-minute documentary, produced by Cintia Cabib, presents a moving and informative picture of this growing sector of the population. Through the voices of these immigrants, their teachers, and counselors, we learn how they come to terms with the emotional scars inflicted by the civil war in their homeland, how they pursue an education while working full-time, and what their hopes are for the future in a country where their legal status remains uncertain. *Here to Stay* was funded by the NEA/AFI Mid-Atlantic Region Media Arts Fellowship Program, the Maryland State Arts Council, and the Arts Council of Montgomery County. *Here to Stay*: Cintia Cabib, 8601 Buckhannon Drive, Potomac, MD 20854.

"What is love?" asks Daresha Kyi, creator of **Counting the Ways**, a series of short films exploring this complex subject from the perspective of an African American woman and tackling issues of sexism, racism, homophobia, class, and economics. The stories look at love as it lives, grows, and sometimes dies between brothers and sisters, friends, lovers, parents and children, even strangers. Kyi has already completed principal photography on the first of the series, *Land Where*

who discover they are both adult children of alcoholics. *Land Where My Fathers Died* was funded by the New York State Council on the Arts and Art Matters and recently won first prize from the Black American Cinema Society in Los Angeles. *Counting the Ways*: Daresha Kyi, Dare She Productions, 215 Jefferson Ave. #4, Brooklyn, NY 11216; (718) 636-0241.

Starting with the Pillsbury/Green Giant layoff of 400 frozen food workers in Watsonville, California, **Dirty Business: Food Exports to the United States** is an exposé of the impact of agribusiness investment in Mexico. Producer Jon Silver followed the Watsonville jobs to Irapuato, a city of half a million people in Central Mexico, where the Pillsbury/Green Giant company pays frozen food workers less than \$4 per day. The 15-minute video includes interviews with young teenagers harvesting and processing foods destined for dinner tables in the United States, documenting the hunger, harsh living conditions, child labor abuses, and severe water pollution that are the underside of the thriving Mexican food-for-export industry. *Dirty Business*: Migrant Media Prods, Box 2048, Freedom, CA 95019; (408) 728-8949.

Currently in production is a 30-minute educational video about gay and lesbian young people by California producer Pam Walton. **Gay Youth** will include the stories of Bobby Griffith, a 20-year-old who committed suicide in 1983, and Gina Gutierrez, a 17-year-old high school senior who is finding support for her sexual identity from loving parents, friends, and teachers. While Americans have made some progress towards accepting

## ATTENTION AIVF MEMBERS

The **In and Out of Production** column is a regular feature in *The Independent*, designed to give AIVF members an opportunity to keep the organization and others interested in independent media informed about current work. We profile works-in-progress as well as recent releases. These are not critical reviews, but informational descriptions. AIVF members are invited to submit detailed information about their latest film or videotape for inclusion in **In and Out of Production**. Send descriptions and black and white photographs to: *The Independent*, 625 Broadway, 9th floor, New York, NY 10012; attn: In and Out of Production.



adult homosexuality, most social institutions refuse to acknowledge that it exists in anyone under the age of 21. Gay and lesbian youth account for 30 percent of all youthful suicides and one-quarter of all homeless kids in the country, and they are three times more prone to drug and alcohol abuse than heterosexual youth. The video will be used to help bring this issue out of the closet through wide public school distribution. Because fundraising from mainstream sources will be difficult due to the subject matter, Walton is soliciting tax-deductible donations. Checks can be made payable to BANGLE (Bay Area Network of Gay and Lesbian Educators) and mailed to: Pam Walton, Box 391025, Mountain View, CA 94039.

**Ghost Dance**, a short film commemorating the hundredth anniversary of the Wounded Knee massacre, earned first prize at the National Poetry Film Festival. The nine-minute film, produced by South Dakota independents Tim Schwab and Christine Craton, uses poetry and artworks inspired by the massacre and its aftermath to give voice to the meaning and consequences of Wounded Knee. The film has been installed as a part of the exhibition "Wounded Knee: Lest We Forget" at the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre, South Dakota, and has been broadcast on South Dakota Public TV. *Ghost Dance*: Unity Productions, 7400 S.W. 70th St., Aberdeen, SD 57401; (605) 225-2559.

Huayno music is the popular music of the Andes. Across Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Chile, there are more than 11-million Indians and Mestizos who listen to this music. But it is virtually unknown to the outside world and seldom heard by tourists. Filmmaker John Cohen, who has been exploring Andean traditions for more than 30 years, recently spent six months in Peru journeying to provincial social clubs, theaters, soccer fields, radio stations—wherever Huayno shows happen. **Dancing with the Incas** will be presented on the BBC series *Rhythms of the World* this year. Cohen is currently seeking funds for subtitles, lab costs, and release prints. *Dancing with the Incas*: John Cohen, 764 Tompkins Corners, Putnam Valley, NY 10579; (914) 528-6453.

Louisiana-based independents Angelique LaCour and Wade Hanks have completed **Rape By Any Name**, a new 60-minute video documentary dealing with acquaintance rape. Intertwining the stories of three rape survivors with the biases and attitudes of experts, jurors, students, and ordinary people the program presents a mock acquaintance rape trial. Unscripted and left to their own devices, the jury discussions demonstrate how a random group responds to the subject. Major funding for *Rape by Any Name* came from the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities and the Baton Rouge Area Foundation. *Rape by Any Name*: Discover Films, Box 840119, New Orleans, LA 70184-0119; (504) 482-5943.



Pam Walton's *Gay Youth*, planned for distribution in public schools, is meant to help social institutions acknowledge the presence of homosexuality among teenagers.

Courtesy videomaker

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## Domestic

**CAMBRIDGE VIDEO FESTIVAL**, August, MA. Short videos by Cambridge residents or by nonresidents on Cambridge subject eligible for 1st yr of fest, sponsored by nonprofit community access center. Formats: 8mm, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: July 26. Contact: Cambridge Community TV, One Kendall Sq. B-400, Cambridge, MA 02139; (617) 225-2500.

**CHICAGO LESBIAN AND GAY FILM FESTIVAL**, Nov. 8-17, IL. 2nd-oldest lesbian & gay fest in US, now in 11th yr, boasts attendance of 10,000 for program of over 80 int'l films & videos. Features & shorts accepted. Held at 750-seat Music Box Theater & Chicago Filmmakers' 200-seat theater. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, super 8, 3/4". Deadline: Aug. 15. Contact: Chicago Filmmakers, 1229 W. Belmont Ave., Chicago, IL 60657; (312) 281-8788; fax: (312) 281-0389.

**DENVER INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, Oct. 10-17, CO. Now in 14th yr, noncompetitive, invitational fest selects new int'l features as well as shorts, docs, animation, experimental & children's programs. More than 85 film programs shown. Annual John Cassavetes Award for outstanding contribution to US ind. filmmaking. No entry fee; entrants responsible for return shipping. Send detailed descriptive info, incl. credits & reviews. Fest will advise about sending preview cassette. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Aug. 1. Contact: Ron Henderson, director, Denver Int'l Film Festival, Box 480044, Denver, CO 80248; (303) 298-8223; fax: (303) 298-0209.

**INDEPENDENT FEATURE FILM MARKET**, Sept. 24-Oct. 3, NY. Now in 13th edition, market annually attracts over 200 domestic & foreign companies (about 600 individuals) to view latest crop of ind. productions; over 80 shown last yr. Participants must be IFP members (\$75 dues); market entry fees range from \$250-400. Features, works in progress, short films, movies for TV (new section) & script directory. Held at NYC's Angelika Film Center. Program also incl. Breakfast Club seminars, Meet the Distributors series, Independents Day Seminar, special section of Eastern European films, School of Visual Arts student award-winning films. Deadline: Aug. 5 (early deadline July 15 guarantees substantial discount). Contact: Sandy Mandelberger, IFP, 132 W. 21st St., 6th fl., New York, NY 10011; (212) 243-7777; fax: (212) 243-3882.

**NEW YORK EXPO OF SHORT FILM AND VIDEO**, Nov. 1-2, NY. Showcase for ind. shorts. Film & video under 60 min. accepted in 4 cats: narrative, doc, experimental, animation. Cash awards totalling \$3,500 awarded, incl \$500 from Eastman Kodak. Fest looking for "films on the cutting edge & work by emerging directors & artists working outside the boundaries of institutions." Entries must be completed after Jan. 1989. Entry fee: \$30. Formats: 16mm, 3/4"; preview on 1/2". Deadline: Sept. 13. Contact: Flash Point Productions, 17 W. 17th St., 10th fl., New York, NY 10011; (212) 226-7350.

**TELLURIDE FILM FESTIVAL**, Aug. 30-Sept. 2, CO. Important selective fest programs many new ind. US & foreign features & docs. Annually attracts large amount of media attention & cross-section of professional media community. Features & shorts accepted. Fest now in 18th yr. Many films premiere here. Entry fee: \$35. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette. Deadline: July 31. Contact: Stella Pence, Telluride Film Festival, National Film Preserve, Box 1156, Hanover, NH 03755; (603) 643-1255; fax: (603) 643-5938.

**This month's festivals have been compiled by Kathryn Bowser, director of the FIVF Festival Bureau. Listings do not constitute an endorsement. Since some details change faster than we do, we recommend that you contact the festival for further information before sending prints or tapes. In order to improve our reliability and make this column more beneficial to independents, we encourage all film-and videomakers to contact FIVF Festival Bureau with their personal festival experiences, positive and negative.**

## Foreign

**DEAUVILLE FILM FESTIVAL**, Aug. 30-Sept. 7, France. Feature-length films not released in Europe & produced in preceding yr eligible for selection in noncompetitive fest for US films, held at French seaside resort. Fest shows both ind. & major studio features (many top Hollywood figures attend) & often serves as launching pad for European release. Program also incl. tributes & retros. Fest will provide accommodations for guests. No entry fee. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: July 31. US rep is Ruda Dauphin, (212) 988-7171. In France, contact: Lionel Chouchan, Festival de Deauville, 33, Ave. MacMahon, 75017 Paris, France; tel: 42 67 71 40; fax: 46 22 88 51.

**GHEENT INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL OF FLANDERS**, Oct., Belgium. Last yr over 43,000 attended fest, now in 18th yr, which focuses on music in film & shows about 100 films. Films w/out Belgian distributor welcome. Awards given to best Belgian films & best foreign movie. Sections incl. Official Section, w/ Competition ("Impact of Music on Film") which awards best film, best original music & best application of music & Out of Competition; Music & Film (incl. docs, musicals & musical features, special events); country focus; Film Spectrum (int'l films receiving Belgian premieres). Concurrent film market. Fest organized by same parent body as Antwerp Film Festival. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: July 31. Contact: Jacques Dubrulle, Int'l Flanders Film Festival-Ghent, Kortryksesteenweg 1104, 9820 Ghent, Belgium; tel: 32 91 218946; fax: 32 91 219074.

**GOLDEN DIANA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL OF NONPROFESSIONAL FILMS**, Sept. 1-6, Austria. Now in 4th yr, fest accepts films by amateurs, w/ awards for best direction, camerawork, script, cutting & editing, acoustic arrangement, humor, sport, documentation. Entry fee: DM10. Deadline: Aug. 3. Contact: Int'l Filmfestival des Nichtprofessionellen Films, Cinematographie of Golden Diana, c/o Paul Kraiger, Hauptplatz 11, 9100 Volkermarkt, Austria; tel: 04236 2645.

**NYON INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL**, Oct., Switzerland. Noncompetitive fest devoted to doc films & videos of social, political, historical or artistic value. Must be completed in preceding yr & deal w/ contemporary issues or show formal & thematic innovation. Awards: Gold & Silver Sesterce, Swiss Fr. 5000 from Swiss TV, certificates of participation. Accepted films eligible for Oscar consideration. Invited directors receive 4 nights accommodation. Entries must be Swiss premieres. No docudramas or publicity films accepted. Fest director Erika de Hadeln will be at Mayflower Hotel in NYC in late July to preview films, hosted by US liaison Gordon Hitchens. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Sept. 1. For info, contact: Gordon Hitchens, 214 W. 85th St., #310, New York, NY 10024; (212) 362-0254, 362-0254. Fest address: Erika de Hadeln, Nyon Int'l Documentary Film Festival, Case Postale 98, CH-1260, Nyon, Switzerland; tel: 41 22 616060; fax: 41 22 617071; telex: 419811 ELEF CH.

**ROTTERDAM FILM FESTIVAL**, Jan. 23-Feb. 2, Netherlands. Fest has reputation for consistently programming innovative, experimental works alongside more commercial prods. Program consists of long & short features & docs. Int'l guests & press invited. Concurrent Cinemart allows filmmakers & producers to present unfinished projects to get final or additional cofinancing. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4"; preview on 1/2". Deadline: Aug. 1. Contact: Emile Fallaux, artistic director, Film Festival Rotterdam, Postbus 21696, 3001 AR Rotterdam, Netherlands; tel: 31 0 10 4118080; fax: 31 010 4135132.

**UPPSALA FILM FESTIVAL**, Oct., Sweden. Located north of Stockholm in university town, Uppsala programs int'l selections of features (around 20), int'l docs & shorts (around 100) & children & youth films. Fest seeks new, unconventional, young cinema. Competition cats: feature, short fiction, animation, doc. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: Aug. 23. Contact: Uppsala Film Festival, Box 1746, 751 47 Uppsala, Sweden; tel: 46 18 16 22 70.

## FIVF THANKS

The Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), the foundation affiliate of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF), supports a variety of programs and services for the independent producer community, including publication of *The Independent*, maintenance of the Festival Bureau, seminars and workshops, an information clearinghouse, and a grant making program. None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the following agencies, foundations and organizations: The New York State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Fund, the Beldon Fund, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Consolidated Edison Company of New York, the Benton Foundation, and the Funding Exchange.



## The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers

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*continued*

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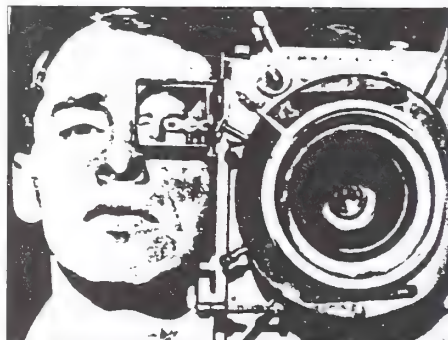
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Notices are listed free of charge. AIVF members receive first priority; others are included as space permits. The Independent reserves the right to edit for length. Deadlines for Notices will be respected. These are the 8th of the month, two months prior to cover date, e.g., August 8 for the October issue. Send to: Independent Notices, FIVF, 625 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.

### Conferences • Seminars

FILM IN THE CITIES workshops: Directing the Actor, July 12-14; Developing Doc. Scripts & Films, July 18-21; Photo-Video Installations, July 19-21; Adapting for the Screen, Aug. 8-11; Lighting on a Tight Budget, Aug. 9-12. Contact: Lightworks, Film in the Cities, 2388 University Ave., St. Paul, MN 55114.

FILM/VIDEO ARTS summer workshops: Beg. 16mm Film Prod., July 29-Oct. 21; Directing the Ind. Doc, Aug. 3; Cinematographer's Master Class, July 6 & 7; Intro to 3/4" Video Editing, English, July 6 & 7, July 20 & 21, Spanish, Aug. 14, 15 & 18; Advanced 3/4" Editing, July 27, 28 & Aug. 3; Prep. for F/VA On-Line Session, Aug. 1; Sound Postprod. for Film & Video, July 11-Aug. 15; Prof. Super 8 Film Prod. Aug. 24; Intro to Digital Effects, July 29-Aug. 19; Complete B.Y.O. Camcorder, July 13-Aug. 17; Arri Cameras Seminar, Aug. 10; Producer's Pkg., Aug. 5 & 6. Minority scholarships avail. Contact: F/VA, 817 Broadway, New York, NY 10003; (212) 673-9361.

SCRIBE VIDEO CENTER: Camcorder prod. workshop, July 12, 19 & 26, July 13, 20 & 27. Contact: Scribe Video Ctr, 1342 Cypress St., Philadelphia, PA 19107; (215) 735-3785.

SUNDANCE INSTITUTE Independent Producers Conference: Intensive weekend dedicated to business of ind. filmmaking, incl. case studies of ind. films & small group problem-solving sessions. July 25-28. Contact: Sundance Institute, Producers Conference, R.R. #3, Box 624-B, Sundance, UT 84604.

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII Film & Video Summer Institute: 1 & 2-wk workshops/seminars in screenwriting, editing, doc filmmaking, animation, elements of prod. & entertainment law. July 15-Aug. 3, Honolulu. Contact: FAVSI, UH Summer Session, 101 Krauss Hall, 2500 Dole St., Honolulu, HI 96822; (808) 956-7221; fax: (808) 956-3421.

VISUAL STUDIES WORKSHOP Summer Institute seminars incl. Earthscore Method of Video Prod., July 1-5; Writing Media Criticism, July 1-5; Digital & Video Moving Image, July 8-12; Intro to Small Format Video, July 22-26; Intro to Digital Audio, July 29-Aug. 2.

Contact: Summer Institute, Visual Studies Workshop, 31 Prince St., Rochester, NY 14607; (716) 442-8676.

### Films • Tapes Wanted

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COE FILM ASSOCIATES, distributors of ind. docs, dramas & children's programs, seeks new work for domestic & foreign TV markets. Send 1/2" or 3/4" cassettes. Contact: Beverly Freeman, CFA, 65 E. 96th St., New York, NY 10128; (212) 831-5355.

NEW DAY FILMS, self-distribution coop for ind. producers, seeks new members w/ recent social issue docs for US nontheatrical markets. Deadline: Sept. 1. Contact: Ralph Arlyck, 79 Raymond Ave., Poughkeepsie, NY 12601.

TAPESTRY INTERNATIONAL seeks ind. docs, drama, music & performance product to sell to foreign & domestic TV. Contact: Lisa Honig, Tapestry Int'l, 924 Broadway, New York, NY 10010; (212) 677-6007; fax: (212) 473-8164.

### Opportunities • Gigs

CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF THE ARTS: Experimental Animation Dept. seeks full-time faculty member for 1991-93. Deadline: July 30. Send resumé & samples of work to: Faculty Search Comm., School of Film/Video, CalArts, 24700 McBean Pkwy, Valencia, CA 91355.

### Publications

FOUNDATION CENTER: *National Data Book of Foundations: A Comprehensive Guide to Grantmaking Foundations* now avail. Price: \$125 plus \$4.50 shipping/handling. Contact: Foundation Center, 79 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10003-3050; (800) 424-9836, (212) 620-4230.

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES: 1990 Annual Report w/ complete listing of all Endowment grants for FY 1990. Free. Contact: NEH 1990 Annual Report, Rm. 406, 1100 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20506.

### Resources • Funds

CPB TELEVISION PROGRAM FUND announces multicultural programming solicitation for development & production of 58 min. programs for nat'l public TV broadcast. Proposals may be submitted in 3 areas: children's & educational, news & public affairs & drama. Producer & director must be minorities. Deadline: August 15. For guidelines contact: Multicultural Programming Solicitation, TV Program Fund, CPB, 901 E St., NW, Washington DC 20004-2006; (202) 879-9600.

DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY TV offers \$500 worth of technical assistance to 10 emerging NY video artists & independent producers for fall & winter 1991. Postprod. & prod. facilities provided. Deadline: Aug. 31. Contact: AIR Program, DCTV, 87 Lafayette St., New York, NY



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**EXPERIMENTAL TV CENTER** offers 5-day intensive residency in video image processing. Deadline: July 15. Also provides small grants to nonprofits to assist w/ presentation of audio, video & related electronic art. Deadline ongoing. Contact: ETC, 180 Front St., Owego, NY 13827; (607) 687-1423.

**FILMMAKERS' COOPERATIVE** offers rental subsidies of up to 50 percent for films & tapes in its collection to assist teachers, librarians & other individual media users. Contact: Filmmakers' Coop, 175 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10016; (212) 889-3820.

**NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES:** Humanities Projects in Media deadline: Sept. 13. Contact: James Dougherty, NEH, 1100 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20506; (202) 786-0278.

**NATIONAL VIDEO RESOURCES** offers management assistance grants to distributors of independent works on video seeking to improve distrib. capacities &/or explore new marketing initiatives. Deadline: July 1. Contact: NVR/Management Assistance Grants, 73 Spring St., Rm. 606, New York, NY 10012.

**NEW YORK FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS** Artists Fellowships in Film & Video. Deadline: Oct. 4. Contact: NYFA, 5 Beekman St., New York, NY 10038; (212) 233-3900.

**NORTHWEST FILM & VIDEO CENTER:** Western States Media Arts Fellowships avail. to film & videomakers living in OR, WA, ID, MT, AK, CA, NV, NM, UT, CO, HI & Pacific territories. Deadline: July 15. Contact: Film Center, Oregon Arts Institute, 1219 SW Park Ave., Portland, OR 97205; (503) 221-1156.

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## MINUTES FROM THE AIVF/ FIVF BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

The board of directors of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers and the Foundation for Independent Video and Film met at Stable Films in New York City on April 19, 1991. In attendance were: Dai Sil Kim-Gibson (chair), Robert Richter (president), Skip Blumberg (vice president), Dee Davis (secretary), Debra Zimmerman (treasurer), Christine Choy, Loni Ding, Jim Klein, Jack Walsh, Bart Weiss, Eugene N. Aleinikoff, and Kathryn Bowser (ex officio).

AIVF/FIVF acting executive director Kathryn Bowser reported that office renovations, made possible by MacArthur Foundation and New York State Council on the Arts grants, were successfully completed. With respect to the institutional development portion of the MacArthur grant, she reported on various consultations regarding potential personnel. She also reported on the progress of the Rockefeller Foundation-funded African resource guide. Potential researchers/writers are being interviewed for the Asia guide. Bowser noted steps toward amending the AIVF by-laws to cover board indemnification; Jack Walsh agreed to provide the relevant language.

Acting advocacy director Martha Gever reported that ITVS contract negotiations had concluded satisfactorily, although not yet signed. She and Robert Richter detailed continuing efforts to reorganize the National Coalition of Independent Public Broadcasting Producers. Gever discussed the proposed revamped structures under discussion. Skip Blumberg brought up the question of accountability and proposed a more significant role for AIVF within the National Coalition. Gever also described AIVF's involvement in lobbying against the proposed 56 percent cut in the NYSCA budget. The uncertain status of funding for the NEA's budget was also noted. With regard to the controversy surrounding Todd Haynes' *Poison*, Gever suggested that the board send a letter of support to NEA chair John Frohnmayer for his support for the film. Board members unanimously agreed.

Managing editor of *The Independent* Patricia Thomson requested a reconsideration of the proposed increase in the magazine's cover price. In light of likely funding cuts from public agencies, she recommended that the increase be deferred for now. The board assented. Patricia White's contribution as editorial assistant during the transition was recognized.

In her capacity as Festival Bureau/Information Services director, Bowser reported that FIVF hosted representatives from the Oberhausen and Sydney Film Festivals during April; over 24 films were selected for Sydney and a number chosen for out-of-competition screenings at Oberhausen. She also reported on the upcoming visit of David Streiff of the Locarno Film Festival and the Bureau's liaison with the London Film Festival. A new edition of the *AIVF Guide to International*

*Film and Video Festivals*, now out of print, is scheduled for publication in September 1991; currently, only xerox copies are available. Independent advertising director Laura Davis will act as the sales representative for the book. Bowser also noted that she has been conducting consultations on distribution with independent producers, a project supported by a grant from National Video Resources.

Seminars/membership director Mary Jane Skalski announced three seminars being planned, including a meeting with CPB Television Program Fund director Don Marbury in June and a meeting with John Schott of ITVS in July. Christine Choy suggested a seminar dealing with multicultural issues, and Skalski agreed to investigate possibilities. In terms of membership development, Skalski said results from a recent direct mail campaign looked promising, and she distributed samples of mailed materials to board members.

Finance/audio director Morton Marks reported on the increase of revenues from the expansion of the publications program. Advertising revenues have also increased.

In a discussion about recent activities of the Advocacy Committee, board members returned to the topic of the National Coalition, agreeing that it needs to refine its role in relation to the Independent Television Service and that AIVF should seek involvement in questions concerning ITVS. The board again considered proposed changes in the structure of the National Coalition; board members suggested clarifications or additional revisions, including clear identification of the fact that the group will be comprised of organizations, as opposed to individuals; that the Coalition office could be housed at AIVF; how representatives will be elected to serve on the Coalition board; and the elimination of the language limiting the number of nominees for the Coalition board slate.

The next meeting of the AIVF/FIVF board is scheduled for June 22, 1991, at the AIVF office. AIVF members are encouraged to attend board and committee meetings. Call AIVF to confirm date, time, and location.

## MINUTES FROM THE ANNUAL AIVF MEMBERSHIP MEETING

AIVF hosted its annual membership meeting on April 19th at Stable Films in lower Manhattan, where an estimated 100 members gathered to hear

staff reports, nominate board members, and socialize. The president of the board of directors, Robert Richter, opened the meeting by introducing the AIVF staff. Managing editor Patricia Thomson reviewed the editorial approach of *The Independent* and encouraged members to send information for the "Memberabilia" and "In and Out of Production" columns. Editor Martha Gever reviewed past articles in *The Independent*. Festival director Kathryn Bowser announced her availability for festival consultations and requested feedback from members on their festival experiences. Membership director Mary Jane Skalski reported on upcoming seminars and the steady increase of membership to 5000 members. Audio/business manager Morton Marks noted the addition of 45 new books to the research library, including contract and entertainment law books. Administrative assistant Stephanie Richardson reported on efforts to provide more information over the phone and update files.

Board nominations followed. Those nominated, seconded, and included on the slate are: Darcy Bonfils, Charles Burnett, John Butler, Dee Davis, Zeinabu Davis, Loni Ding, Herman Engle, Billy Jackson, Gary Krane, Betsy Newman, Rory O'Connor, Donna Olsen, Mildred Pollner, Chris Quinn, David Royle, James Schamus, Sheldon Siporin, Jack Walsh, Bart Weiss, and Debra Zimmerman.

Finally, feedback and suggestions for the organization were solicited from AIVF members. Suggestions included: changing AIVF's office hours to include weeknight and/or weekend hours; more articles in *The Independent* on international topics and on video and computer technologies; and addressing filmmakers' problems with distributors through seminar programming.

## MEMBERABILIA

Congratulations to **Electronic Arts Grants** recipients Joan Boccino, *Mom Makes Lasagna*; Norman Cowie and Trish Rosen, *If We Can Make Smart Weapons*; Shalom Gorewitz, *Rock Dancing*; Barbara Hammer, *Naked Singularities*; Mary Perillo, *Big Clock #1*; Megan Roberts and Raymond Ghirardo, *Disguised as a Different Life Form*; and Timothy Masick and William Trainer, *here*. Kudos to recipients of **Astraea National Lesbian Action Foundation** grants Sonya Friedman and Vivian Fine, *Uliana and Her Hollywood Ten*, and Jean Carlomusto, Catherine Saalfeld, and Polly Thistlewaite, *Lesbian Herstory Archives Video Project*. Ed Robbins won a local **Emmy Award** for *A Shtick and a Dream* and an **Outstanding Local Television Program** award from GLAAD for *Gay Bashing*. *Feast of the Gods*, by David Sutherland, earned the Best Fine Arts Film award in the 1991 **Birmingham International Educational Film Festival** and Best Fine Arts Film in the **American Video Conference Awards**. Franck Goldberg's *How to Squash a Squat* won an Honorable Mention at the **Atlanta Film/Video Festival** in the Advocacy Video category.



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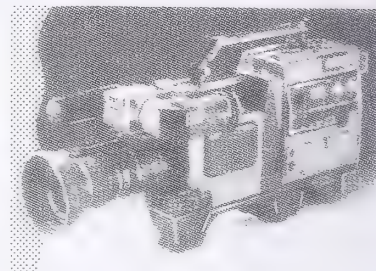
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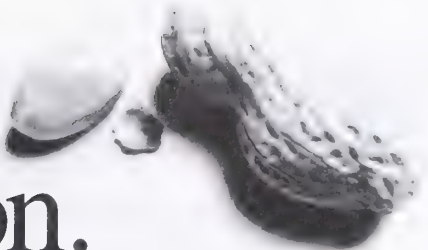
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THE INDEPENDENT CHOICE





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COVER: French film actress Emmanuelle Chaulet surveys Manhattan in *All the Vermeers in New York*, Jon Jost's new 35mm feature. In this issue, critic Manohla Dargis profiles the films and working methods of Jost, a 30-year veteran of low-budget, improvisational filmmaking. Also featured is Don Adams and Arlene Goldbard's overview of funding for media arts organizations. Photo courtesy Complex Corporation.

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## LETTERS

### TECHNICAL DIFFERENCES

*To the editor:*

As someone who, after years of high-end production, has also felt the liberating rush of discovering hi-8's potential, I was very glad to see hi-8 covered in the May 1991 issue ["Hi-8: High Powered, Low Priced"].

In an otherwise excellent overview, there was one key piece of information missing. It's something everyone I know who's gotten into hi-8 is very confused about: How do you retain the high line count of component hi-8 when bumping up to Betacam or 3/4" SP? You may be shooting near 400 lines, but can only transfer (except to hi-8 or S-VHS) in 230 lines composite. Thus it is misleading to talk about resolution only on the front end without explaining this shortcoming on the back end.

Among those I spoke with was the technical head of ABC's documentary editing rooms, which recently added Sony's hi-8 deck. Although he likes hi-8 a lot, they make their transfers to Betacam using the composite line, not component. There is no way to encode the Y/C signal directly to Betacam right now. Other technicians said the same—the Y/C output of 410 lines is only an editing reality when going directly from hi-8 to hi-8 deck.

However, someone must have found out how to get more punch from hi-8 material. Maybe I'm wrong. Maybe the outputs from the new Sony hi-8 deck pass along the higher line count to Betacam or other bump-up format. In fact, your article mentioned that S-connectors (Y/C component input) are "available on 3/4" SP" decks. Does this allow direct transfer, which would then be better than hi-8 to Betacam? How does the S-connector become "available?" Is it an adaptor? Which edit suites might have them? Information on this critical point would be greatly appreciated by myself and many others.

—Ed Robbins  
New York, NY

*To the editor:*

The hi-8 article is laden with inaccurate and contradictory statements. Interested readers should discard it and talk to dealers, manufacturers' reps, and people already working with the format. The article is correct but misleading in saying that hi-8 time code is different from the SMPTE standard, implying that it is incompatible with standard editing systems. Sony's editing play decks (EVO 9800 and 9800A), mentioned in the article, allow time code editing directly from hi-8 onto anything. There are now many hi-8-to-3/4" interformat editing rooms, and recently a few hi-8-to-Betacam rooms have appeared in New York. Incidentally, the 9800 provides the highest video quality for hi-8 (better than when played on a camera recorder).

Hi-8 audio is strange to work with, but the real problem with hi-8 is rarely discussed out loud: sinister dropouts—usually black horizontal lines—which plague the miniature format. Many think they're caused by certain brands of tape, but dirt appears to be the culprit. Clean your heads constantly (and maybe check out S-VHS).

Video is the only visual medium for which the motto "You get what you pay for" defines its aesthetics. Cameras and recording formats vary in their palettes, and I urge videomakers comparing equipment to look

and ask themselves, "How does it feel?" Ignore the lux/resolution numbers game.

We live in a unique era. The difference between high-end and inexpensive video is not so great. It's harder for broadcasters to keep independent work off the air with the old bugaboo of broadcast standards. But soon the media giants will be high definition and digital, and we'll be shut out again.

—Charles Steiner  
New York, NY

*To the editor:*

I enjoyed the May issue, especially Larry Loewinger's helpful article on hi-8. As one about to purchase new equipment for professional use, I found that he answered many of my questions about that video format.

I have been an AIVF member for seven years, five while in New York City and now two here in Oklahoma. During all that time I have increasingly appreciated *The Independent's* role in helping AIVF's membership grow, both in numbers and in professional awareness. Especially for us outside the New York City area, the magazine becomes the only tangible proof that the organization does indeed exist. The publication is currently AIVF's most effective service tool for its members. And when we consider future growth, we cannot underestimate the power of this tool to attract and serve potential members as well.

We are, of course, an advocacy group, but sometimes interest in advocacy is not as urgent to all those whom AIVF might yet serve. Issues of advocacy should be presented on an ongoing basis, but not crowd out other matters that we independents face every day.

—Larry H. Webb  
Oklahoma City, OK

*Larry Loewinger replies:*

The surging popularity of the hi-8 video format is indicated by the response my article has provoked. Ed Robbins is correct in observing that there is a loss of resolution—in this case, luminance resolution—when bumping up to another format. This loss is both inevitable and not necessarily serious.

Charles Steiner should remember that the information and equipment available to him in New York is not necessarily available to those working in smaller cities and the outlying areas. However, once you cut through the hyperbole of Steiner's letter, he makes some useful observations, too. The time code on hi-8 video is called 8mm time code. Through something called an interpolator, which is available on the EVO 9800A hi-8 deck, it can be read as SMPTE time code.

Drop outs, as I indicated and Steiner reiterates, can be a serious problem. During the editing of my article, a final sentence was cut from a quote by Eric Solstein in which he comments on the drop-out problem. He called drop out on hi-8 "the mother of all drop outs." On any highly miniaturized magnetic media such as hi-8 and DAT, drop outs can be devastating. Clean heads and well-maintained equipment will minimize but not eliminate the problem.

Anyone working in hi-8 or exploring its potential should not take my article as the final word. In the video world, in contrast to film, constant and relentless change is the byword. What is current now will be out of date in a few months or, at most, a year. Get all the information you can and then take the plunge.





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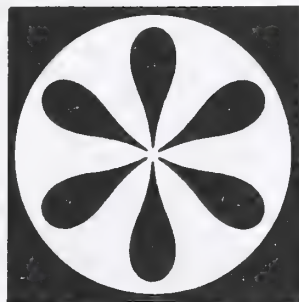
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## CLASH OF VISIONS, 1992

### NEH Chair Dry-Docks Christopher Columbus Project

The NEH is again embroiled in controversy due to its refusal to fund *1492: Clash of Visions*, which looks at the "discovery" of the Americas from multiple points of view, indigenous as well as European.

The year 1992, the long-anticipated 500th commemoration of Christopher Columbus' arrival in the Americas, will also be an anniversary of sorts for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). It marks 10 years of conservative politicization at the Endowment since former chair William Bennett first made headlines in 1982 by attacking Helena Solberg-Ladd's film *From the Ashes...Nicaragua Today* as "socialist realist propaganda." The assault on the NEH-funded documentary set the tone for Bennett's tenure, during which he went so far as to use the chair's discretionary funds to help finance an Accuracy in Media rebuttal to the public television series *Vietnam: A Television History* ["Bennett Takes Aim," September 1984].

Looking towards the quincentenary, the NEH is again embroiled in controversy due to its refusal to fund *1492: Clash of Visions*, a four-part public television series that looks at the "discovery" of the Americas from multiple points of view, indigenous as well as European. In a detailed account published in the March 13 issue of the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Karen Winkler focused on current NEH chair Lynne Cheney as point person for the rejection. Cheney has carried on the conservative helmsmanship of her predecessor at the Endowment. In 1986 she led the much-publicized attack on the nine-part public television series *The Africans*. Cheney accused the NEH-funded series, which featured the commentary of Kenyan scholar Ali A. Mazrui, of being an "anti-Western diatribe" ["NEH Disowns *The Africans*," November 1986].

Cheney's problems with *1492* appear to be of a similar bent. According to reports in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and the *New York Times*, NEH's rejection letter faulted the production proposal's lack of even-handedness. It cited "distressing aspects of Aztec culture being minimized, while the excesses of the Spanish are emphasized." But *1492* staff, which includes producer Yanna Kroyt Brandt and some 25 advisory scholars, claim that peer review recommendations were stellar and the Endowment's rejection represented Cheney's own bias regarding the interpretation of the European role in the New World. The project was endorsed by the federal Christopher Columbus Quincentenary Jubilee Commission and the Spanish government's quincentenary office, Spain '92.

For longtime NEH watchers the friction over the interpretation of history and culture is nothing

new. It may only be keener today as the battle lines are drawn in the war over "political correctness" in academia. Regarding the quincentenary, the ideological division boils down to whether the anniversary celebrates the spread of western civilization into the New World or marks the proliferation of European imperialism into the cultures of native peoples. Over the next year the Endowment may continue to generate a lot of heat in television programming, not for what is on the air but for what it would prefer not to touch.

RENEE TAJIMA

### PALESTINIAN CONFLICT AT THE ICA

On May 1, the day before *Uprising: Film and Video on the Palestinian Resistance* was to open at Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA), the guest curators withdrew the show, claiming it had been manipulated and politicized by the ICA. Palestinian filmmaker Elia Suleiman and US film- and videomaker Dan Walworth originally mounted the exhibition, which featured current work by Palestinians about life in the occupied territories, for Artists Space in New York City in November 1989.

The curators' action, taken amid charges and countercharges of misunderstanding and censorship, ended their 20-month-long negotiations with the ICA. Ironically the ICA prided itself on having taken a strong anti-censorship stance in hosting the controversial Robert Mapplethorpe exhibition the previous summer. This time, however, the challenge to artistic expression came from within and proved harder to resist than Jesse Helms.

Originally *Uprising* was to be shown at the ICA in May 1990. An accompanying panel discussion was suggested early on but got lost along the way, a victim of budget restraints and lack of focus. Then in January 1990 vice president of the ICA board of directors Steven Grossman noticed *Uprising* in the schedule and, according to one ICA curator, "hit the ceiling." While acknowledging the museum's right to show work that he considered "political propaganda," he insisted, in his words, on "balancing it in some way."

The ICA board usually has minimal involvement in media programming, but in an apparent effort at accommodation David Ross, ICA's executive director at the time, went to New York City to meet with the curators. According to Suleiman, Ross suggested that they extend the



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series by "adding another perspective," that is, by showing Palestinian and Israeli films on alternate days.

The curators refused. Instead they forged an agreement with the ICA stipulating that any Israeli film series be separated from Uprising by at least a month, there be no shared program notes, and the ICA consult them on future decisions about the Palestinian series. Uprising was rescheduled for May 1991, and the ICA commissioned film historian Ella Shohat of New York to curate a parallel program of Israeli-made films about Palestinians which would be shown the following month.

Then came the Gulf War. According to ICA interim director Elisabeth Sussman, the board "became quite alarmed about the advisability of doing the series at this time." The war also made it difficult to obtain the Israeli films for the second series. Suleiman says the ICA again tried to convince him to postpone Uprising, but he refused and objected angrily because the series hadn't been included in ICA's printed calendar. The museum decided to go ahead with the series as scheduled and, as a show of good faith, did a special mailing to publicize it.

Then Grossman, a businessman and chair of the state Democratic party, resigned, notifying the press even before the ICA. The Anti-Defamation League supported his action. In a subsequent letter to the *Boston Globe*, Grossman skirted the issue of Mideast politics and the content of the films, focusing instead on the educational role of the ICA. The museum had long strived, he wrote, "to provide badly needed context for work that was often difficult to comprehend or interpret."

Still seeking a middle ground, the ICA re-

sponded to the controversy by planning a panel discussion. After several attempts at determining a topic, they settled on "how artistic programs should or should not be contextualized in a public setting," according to an ICA statement. But Suleiman and Walworth resented the limited role the ICA allowed them in designing the panel and thought it insulting for their exhibition to be used as an example of controversial art. As Suleiman told the *Boston Globe*, "They don't want Palestinians to stand on their own and present themselves culturally. We are not a problem. We are not a question. We are not numbers. We have a culture of our own and can have an aesthetic discussion." Feeling ill-used, he and Walworth withdrew their show. Suleiman conjectures, "If these films had been about Palestinians instead of by them, it would have been okay [for the ICA]."

Uprising was quickly picked up by the Space, an artist-run gallery in Boston, and screened in June. At the same time, Shohat withdrew her association with the Israeli series as a show of support for the two curators. Nonetheless the museum went ahead with the Israeli film exhibition. As a final irony, the two series ended up running simultaneously, albeit in different venues.

This is a tale of good intentions gone awry, but the problems it embodies are more insidious. There is the allure of branding work that makes people uncomfortable "political," so that it must be explained. There's the temptation to diffuse disagreement by calling it miscommunication, leaving the real issues clouded. There is also the disquieting migration of the concept of balance from television news to the art museum, two very different arenas. And finally, there's the greater



A sign of the times: An exhibition of Palestinian media met with resistance when scheduled at Boston's ICA. Still from *Nazareth in August*, by Norman Cowie, Ahmed Damian, and Dan Walworth.

Courtesy videomakers

difficulty of standing up for unfettered expression when the attack comes from within.

NAN LEVINSON

*Nan Levinson is the US correspondent for Index on Censorship and writes from Boston.*

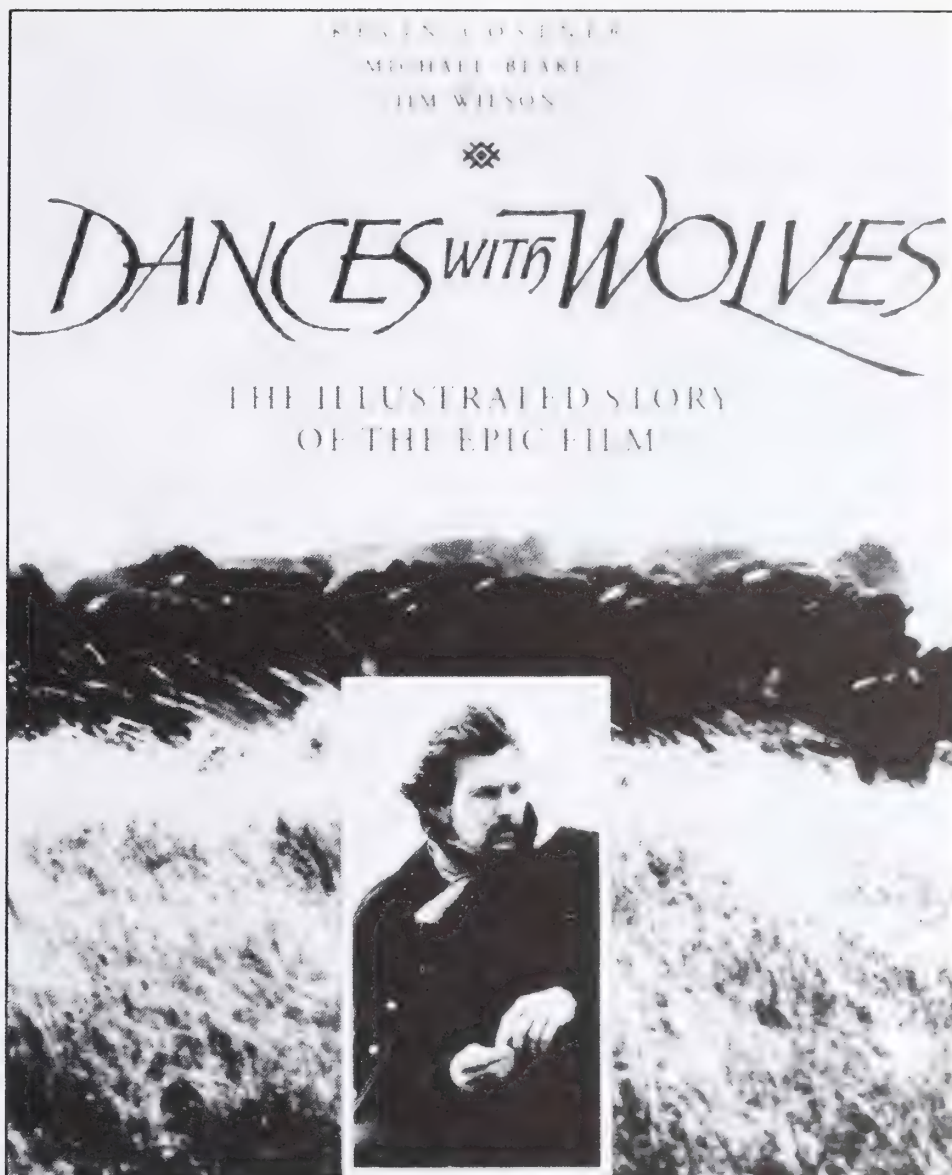
## COW PUT OUT TO PASTURE

Distributors of women's film and video in England and Canada have been hard hit by recent funding cuts and financial problems. London's Cinema of Women (COW) shut down this spring. A second London-based distributor of media by and about women, Circles, was given a reprieve by its primary funder and is now being reconfigured under the name Cinenova. This new organization will continue to represent the makers in Circles' catalogue of nearly 300 films and tapes and hopes to pick up the defunct COW's collection. Meanwhile, distribution is at a standstill at the Vancouver-based Women in Focus Society (WIF), as the organization strives to overcome its current fiscal and organizational crisis.

Circles at first opposed the idea of a merger and the implication that women's filmmaking is a marginal activity in the UK requiring only one distributor.

Last May the British Film Institute (BFI) drastically cut Circles' and COW's grants in a move to force the emergence of a single, streamlined women's distributor in the UK. BFI's intervention reflects the climate in British arts funding in recent years, in which long established, politically committed organizations have been defunded or nudged towards reliance on earned income [see "Threat of Sunset Funding Looms over British Media Groups," April 1989].

When the suggestion of a merger came up, Circles at first opposed it and the implication that women's filmmaking is a marginal activity requiring only one distributor. Circles and COW



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have always maintained distinct emphases in their rosters. COW, founded in 1979, released such theatrical features as Marleen Gorris' *A Question of Silence* and Lizzie Borden's *Born in Flames*. They also carried a strong collection of social issue documentaries. Circles, founded in 1980, is best known for its experimental films. In addition, the distributor has achieved success with the release of a package of African American women's work. Despite their differences, the two organizations realized the need to face hard times united. Over the past year they worked together campaigning for public support, planning a merger, and designing initiatives for a new organization.

In January, however, BFI rejected their business plan for a merger, saying it was too costly. As a result, COW was forced to close down. Circles reorganized, both to assume some of COW's functions and to satisfy BFI's mandate. While unhappy with the fate of COW, the organization's former business manager Abina Manning believes that the discussions over the past year will contribute to a stronger women's distributor. BFI agreed to fund Cinenova for one year, encouraging the organization to move towards financial independence.

According to Cinenova's Liane Harris, formerly with Circles, the new organization aims to increase its public profile and that of women's films in general. They plan to broaden their base by developing more effective marketing, seeking contracts with major distributors, and launching new work at high-visibility venues, such as London's Metro Cinema and Institute of Contemporary Art. Cinenova must make up for time lost during a year of transition and uncertainty. They are now preparing a supplement to the Circles catalogue. Harris concludes, "It is very unfortunate that COW had to close down, but I feel optimistic about the new organization." She hopes Cinenova's films will "reach audiences that might

otherwise be deterred [by feminist cinema] and zap them with political content."

In Canada, it looked as if Women in Focus, a feminist cultural center and distributor of women's films since 1974, would also be forced to close. WIF's 105 members voted on March 20 to dissolve the organization, due to a crippling deficit that made it impossible to pay staff salaries. Subsequently, however, the interim board realized it was not within the members' legal power to take this action, says board member Sue Jenkins. As a result, the future of the organization remains up in the air. Jenkins says efforts are being made to save WIF, which represents about 200 films and tapes.

Although distribution generates income, it is never enough for distributors of feminist cinema. In order to promote shorts, experimental films, work by emerging artists, and politically committed films and tapes on women's issues, they will always be dependent on subsidies. BFI's action—forcing two women's organizations to compete for limited monies—may portend the future of public funding for women's work in a conservative era. Harris believes that it is lucky even one organization survived. Manning concurs: "Without our public campaign, there would be nothing now."

PATRICIA WHITE

## PRIMETIME IN INDEPENDENCE CITY

WYBE-Channel 35, Philadelphia's new community-oriented public television station, recently kicked off a 10-week series focusing on indepen-

Dean Lance's *A Hard Reign's Gonna Fall* was included in WYBE's new independent showcase series, *Through the Lens*.

Courtesy filmmaker







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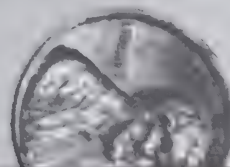
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dent work. Called *Through the Lens*, this is WYBE's first locally produced series. The fact that the station would choose an independent film and video showcase as its premiere series production is a telling symbol of the station's priorities. Although WYBE is not the only public television station to present independent work, *Through the Lens* is showing the right thing at the right time—and that's called primetime.

*Through the Lens*, which ran from April 23 to June 25, was composed of 30 thematically grouped films and videos on subjects ranging from AIDS to Central American politics. Most of the programs were Philadelphia broadcast premieres, and 60 percent were produced by Pennsylvanians. Apart from treating subjects ignored or simplified by mainstream media, *Through the Lens* included strong representation of works by women, Latinos, Asian Americans, African Americans, and lesbians and gays. According to series curator Lise Yasui, who is also a filmmaker, "It was not completely on purpose that we ended up with a lot of representation of people of color. I was programming good work at a time that audiences needed to see it." Given recent debates on how mainstream media, funders, and exhibition centers are appropriating multicultural initiatives, Yasui is quick to assure, "I never intended that *Through the Lens* serve as Channel 35's 'multicultural hour,' which has become a way of coopting people of color's work. One of the main reasons that *Through the Lens* may seem people of color-oriented is that it looks so different from mainstream TV. Participation by people of color is across the board."

This reflects WYBE's commitment to local audiences, as summarized in the station's mission statement: "to serve Philadelphia's diverse communities—people whose concerns are not addressed adequately in media today." WYBE general manager Aaron Ezekiel is emphatic about this commitment, explaining, "Despite the fact that there is multicultural hype and strong arguments for multicultural programming reaching mainstream media, it is by no means something secure. Opposing forces from the white upper-class heterosexual male establishment are portraying themselves as a disenfranchised minority who also need control and representation. Multicultural representation is still a struggle."

*Through the Lens* loosely organized its diverse material using such themes as ethnic identity, AIDS, community empowerment, experimental visions, and Central American migration and politics. The series included work by well-known independents like Su Friedrich (*Sink or Swim*) as well as young talent like Sadie Benning, whose video *Jollies*, an 11-minute exploration of lesbian identity, takes low tech, Fisher-Price footage to its upper limits. *Suelto!*, by Chris Emmanoulides, Tim Sexton, and Rebecca Taggart, combines film and video to tell a story about machismo and American tourists at the bullfights in Pamplona, while Shu Lea Cheang's *Color Schemes* uses a variety of video techniques to create a collage of actors talking about racial assimilation and color



casting. The series also included such works as *Cycles*, by Zeinabu irene Davis; *Hairpiece: A Film for Nappy-Headed People*, by Ayoka Chenzira; *Algebra and Other Menstrual Confusions*, by Connie Coleman and Alan Powell; and *All Orientals Look the Same*, by Valerie Soe.

Despite WYBE's high expectations, the station must contend with a low budget. Yasui comments, "We couldn't assure huge audiences or high prices. Yet some producers, like Su Friedrich, whose film had been written about everywhere, didn't bat an eye when I said it was 14 dollars per minute. And people like Ellen Spiro [*DiAna's Hair Ego: AIDS Info Up Front*] were happy that the piece would have a chance to reach more people."

What's next for WYBE? Ezekiel is raising funds to present another *Through the Lens* next year and possibly expand the series. Despite the recent 25 percent cut in the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts' budget, Ezekiel looks forward to acquiring more independent work. "It's sad that a lot of independents are producing high quality work that is seen more in Europe and within the independent film community than by its intended audiences. We hope that by making series like the Learning Channel's *The Independents* available to the [public television] network, we may help change this situation," Ezekiel adds, "Despite the fact that funding is still a struggle for us, we are trying to cross the lines of cultural difference, so

we can change TV. Maybe it's a fantasy, but that's our goal."

FRANCES NEGRON-MUNTANER

*Frances Negrón-Muntaner is a writer and media-maker who lives in Philadelphia and whose video AIDS in the Barrio was included in Through the Lens.*

## SEQUELS

Charges were dismissed against the **Artpark 18** ["Art Bust at Artpark," December 1990] in a pretrial hearing. The group of Buffalo artists was arrested in September 1990 when protesting Artpark's cancellation of a performance by San Francisco artists Survival Research Laboratories, which criticized religious fundamentalists.



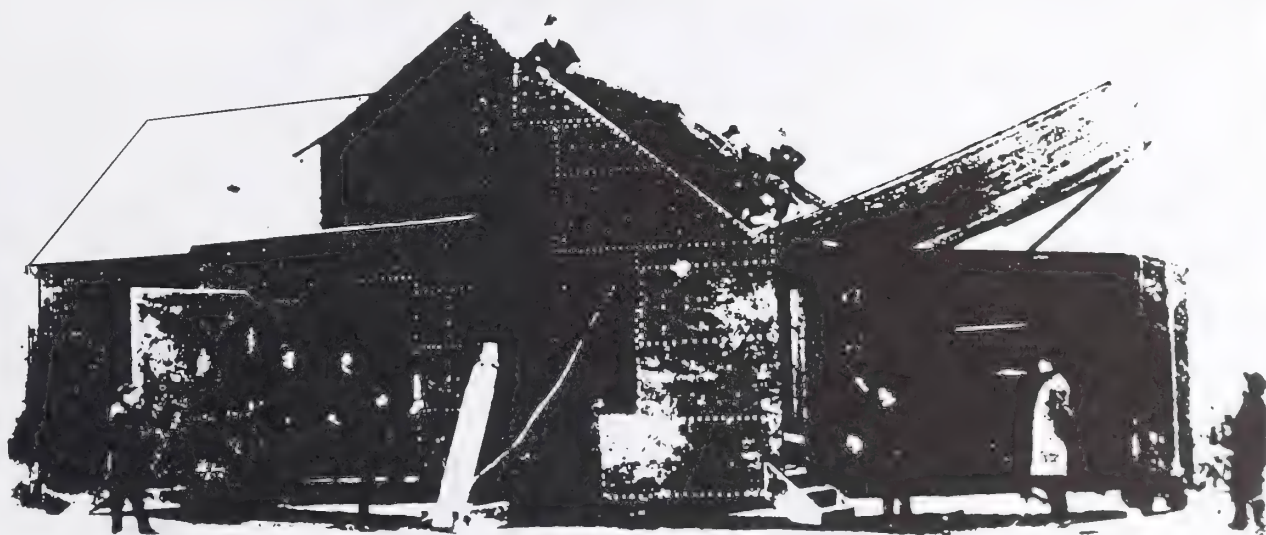
Grants totalling more than \$259,000 have been awarded to 17 Kentucky independent producers from **Kentucky Educational Television's Fund** for Independent Productions ["The Greening of the Blue Grass State," July 1990]. The fund was established with money appropriated by the Kentucky General Assembly in 1990. Production awards for individual projects range from \$5,900 to \$20,000. Kentucky is the first state to create such a fund.



**B. Ruby Rich** has resigned from her post as director of the Electronic Media and Film program at the New York State Council on the Arts. Rich, who joined the council as director of the film program more than 10 years ago, will be undertaking various writing projects. **Ellen Schneider** left her position as coproducer at *P.O.V.* to assume the post of director of communications at the Independent Television Service. The National Campaign for Freedom of Expression in Washington, D.C., has named its first executive director, **David Mendoza**. Mendoza is leaving his post as founding director of Artist Trust in Seattle. Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (LACE) has appointed **Gwen Darien**, former deputy director of the P.S. 1 Museum and Clocktower Gallery, as its new executive director.

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# OFF HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD

## The L.A. Freewaves Video Festival

BARBARA OSBORN

The first thing L.A. Freewaves proved is that there is an independent media community in Los Angeles. You had to wonder—if there is so much independent video going on, why has L.A. kept such a low national profile?

The phrase “independent video community,” when used in Los Angeles, is laced with contradictions and impossibilities. In L.A. “independent” denotes projects not affiliated with the film studios. “Video” refers to a medium that receives little support and less notice, and “community” implies a connectedness that doesn’t exist in the city’s hefty sprawl. So the development of a new month-long festival of Los Angeles independent video events practically constitutes a triumph over nature.

Touted as a regional festival, L.A. Freewaves (whose name is a play on that elaborate web of freeways connecting one part of the city to another) consisted of 44 video events throughout the month of March. The screenings took place at museums, galleries, community centers, and public access facilities scattered 50 miles in any direction: The festival organizers also managed to link up with dozens of cable systems—a vital communications link in this part of the world where distances are great and traffic heavy—which cablecast eight hours of independent video programming.

The first thing Freewaves proved is that there is a lively independent media community in Los Angeles. Half of the hundreds of hours of videotape came from southern California producers. A profusion of video art by Latino, Asian American, African American, and white artists appeared throughout the city. *Salsa Opera*, Alan Bolt’s interactive performance transmitted via slow-scan video, linked Managua and Santa Monica. Tapes

from the local Artist-in-the-Schools programs were shown at Barnsdall Art Park in Hollywood. Wendy Clarke’s collaboration with Chino inmates, *One on One*, was shown at Kaos in Leimert Park. Videomakers in Pomona held their own local screening. You had to wonder—if there is so much independent video going on, why has L.A. kept such a low national profile?

The answer lies in the unique nature of L.A. The lights of Hollywood blind people to other media production. They beckon thousands of would-be producers, directors, production designers, actors, and other hopefuls each year. Local film schools churn out students primed for the mainstream movie industry, which commands the attention of virtually all media press and colors all coverage. The emphasis on entertainment is inescapable. Adrienne Jenik, video coordinator at Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (LACE), L.A.’s premiere contemporary performance space, says that since arriving in Los Angeles 18 months ago from New York City, she has seen not so much alternative media as alternative entertainment.

No less significant is L.A. geography. Audiences are hard to get. Everything in this town requires driving, usually great distances in lots of traffic. It takes a lot to motivate people to get in their cars and trek to a video screening. Geography also has an impact on politics. L.A.’s distance from Washington, D.C. makes legislative politics seem light-years away. Closer to home, the Los Angeles car culture insulates people from one



*Made in Hollywood*, by Bruce and Norman Yonemoto, was among the many homegrown Southern California productions featured in the new L.A. Freewaves festival.

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*In Visible Colors included  
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Wheaton and Forest  
Whitaker's video short  
calling for a reordering of  
Black identity.*

Courtesy videomaker

*The Lost Notebooks of  
Amelia Earhart, by Kathleen  
Sweeney and Jeffrey  
Marino, was part of the  
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another. It's hard to feel much for folks you pass at 50 miles per hour. Independent media is charged by political ideology, but politics has a tough time getting a toe-hold here, and the political weltanschauung that might catalyze and sustain alternative production barely exists. The estrangement from politics was poignantly made during a festival presentation of Deep Dish TV's *The Gulf Crisis TV Project* at the University of California-Los Angeles. A video activist in search of a community asked of fellow audience members, "Is there political video in L.A.?"

Finally, L.A. lacks institutions that consistently support video. Since 1989, when L.A.'s Endowment for the Arts started generating funds for the Cultural Affairs Department, an array of projects and programming have received support—but equipment purchase has not. Equipment access programs virtually don't exist, with the notable exception of Long Beach Museum of Art's Open Channels project. If you need equipment, you've either got to work in the industry and get access through your job or have very deep pockets. For exhibition, major institutions like the American Film Institute (AFI) and the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) have given most local video the slip. AFI's barely hospitable treatment of video is the stuff of legend. Their National Video Festival, never very supportive of L.A. producers, has shriveled to a shadow of its former self, with no catalog, few attendees, and little fanfare. MOCA, the city's major contemporary art institution, has provided sincere but sporadic support for video, primarily video installation.

But what initially looks like a barren and unpropitious landscape for independent media is, on closer viewing, a surprisingly fertile field, as L.A. Freewaves so clearly demonstrated. L.A.'s demographics puts the city in a strong position to reformulate media arts in this Age of Multiculturalism. O. Funmilayo Makarah, a key festival organizer and curator of *In Visible Colors*, a show of African American videomakers' work, says L.A. Freewaves was meant to go beyond video-as-art and encompass the whole range of alternative media production. And so it did, reaching far beyond the white arts community, showcasing work and drawing audiences from L.A.'s better-than-50-percent Latino, African American, and Asian American population. The festival's success in tapping diverse community resources is due in part to the fact that, in its second year, it is still a grassroots effort. (A far less ambitious version of L.A. Freewaves was held in November 1989.) Although city funding was essential, the festival relied heavily on the enthusiasm and volunteer labor of dozens of Angeleno videomakers. The entire event was coordinated by Anne Bray, former video coordinator at LACE, but the festival was run by a loose collective. Anybody who showed up to meetings got a vote.

The festival organizers adopted a mix and match strategy toward multiculturalism. Some exhibitors presented programs that matched the

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interests of their regular audiences. Others presented work that drew in their normal audience, plus attracting newcomers because of the nature of the event. The California Afro-American Museum presented *In Visible Colors*, for instance, a natural complement to its African American programming. The series was also shown at the state university at Northridge. The Empowerment Project, known for their documentaries on Central America, sponsored a show at the high-tech Electronic Cafe, while other Latin American tapes were shown in Spanish at Macondo, a Hispanic cultural center. The exhibition *Tapes from J-Town* was presented in the heart of Little Tokyo, while Michael Zinzun, a black community organizer and producer of the cable access show *Message to the Grassroots*, presented his work to new audiences at the University of California, Los Angeles.

For most shows there was decent attendance. While the program in Little Tokyo attracted a nearly all-Asian audience, the panel held at LACE, *Black Men in America: Changing Reality?*, played to a modestly mixed house, notable only for the near-absence of white men. In general, attendance was helped by the unusual amount of coverage in the papers that count—the *L.A. Times* and the *L.A. Weekly*. Cable audiences, though unmeasurable, play a central role in a town where people prefer to stay at home. Over 32 systems signed on, from as far north as Santa Barbara and south to Long Beach.

The festival's \$38,000 budget was modest, to say the least. A critical \$22,000 came from the Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department. Private video companies also contributed. Local "video heroes" kicked in for festival expenses. They included the distributors Connoisseur Video and Pacific Arts Tapes, the video rental stores Rocket Video and Vidiots, plus an outfit that manufacturers interactive discs, Voyager Company.

Perhaps the most exciting aspect of the festival is the example it offers. L.A. Freewaves brought together a diverse community of alternative mediamakers. It effectively challenged the art hegemony that often overshadows other forms of independent video and demonstrated that a productive group of art, documentary, and public access producers, students, and teachers are working in L.A. By forging precedent-setting links between disparate independent media producers and their constituencies, L.A. Freewaves did Los Angeles a big favor. And it established a valuable model for media arts organizing around the country.

Barbara Osborn recently moved from New York to Los Angeles. She covers video and television for the industry and art press.

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 KERTHY FIX
 

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To my left the director of photography works her magic with an orange juice bottle full of water. Placed in front of a gelled Mole, it throws fire-like light onto the actors' faces. To my right the assistant camera operator clears the brush stacked around the fire pit, so the tripod won't fall over. Beside the fire two crew members spray kindling wood with lighter fluid, so the flames will climb high enough to appear in the frame. Behind them another crew member distresses a page from a

and crews are always racing the clock to get the shot. In Texas independent filmmakers have a supportive community of peers, but they are often struggling to establish financial contact with the film centers of Los Angeles and New York.

In this particular eight-minute film school project, nine people are working on lights, sound, continuity, and camera. When we finish, we will have spent almost \$1,600 and three months of our lives getting it done. In contrast to the professional

world of film, eight out of nine of us are women. We know this will probably be one of the few times in our lives when this is the case.

Many of the crew members will go on to work on the four or five independent features that are made here each year. Feature film production in Texas falls into two categories. First is the film financed in L.A. and run by industry types who come to Texas with above-the-line personnel already chosen. They like the cheap crew rates that are made possible by Texas' right-to-work laws. The second category consists of productions that originate in-state with funding scraped together from within Texas' borders—usually out of the pockets of friends and family.

Although the Texas Film Commission woos the large Hollywood productions, independent producers and directors are making films in-state with little or no assistance. "The [Texas] Film Commission only focuses on out-of-state productions and dollars. They really don't court in-state people," says Robert Nowotny, an award-winning independent filmmaker based in Houston. "The assumption is that in-state producers will produce in-state. They think, 'Let's go get Hollywood money.'" But disproving

their logic, both of Nowotny's films, *Billy Galvin* and *The Radicals*, were shot out-of-state.

Nowotny believes this focus on Hollywood has resulted in the lack of any private or government organization that has been effective in educating the financial community in Texas. Brokerage houses and banks that arrange loans for films in



With donations of money, equipment, and time from Houston filmmakers and artists, Robert Ziebell's *This State I'm In* became a community project.

Courtesy filmmaker

porn magazine to make it look charred. In the midst of all this I'm trying to help the actor remember his monologue as a tape measure comes over my shoulder and a light meter is put to his face.

Welcome to the joys of low-budget filmmaking, where a new problem turns up every minute



The aimless hipsters of Richard Linklater's *Slacker* have nothing better to do than propound their theories of space invasion and the Kennedy assassination.

Courtesy Filmmaker

Los Angeles and New York simply don't exist here. Even for smaller investors the risks seem great.

"The few scams that have happened left a bad taste in people's mouths," Nowotny explains. People with little knowledge of the film industry decide they want to switch from real estate investment to film. In pitching a project to others, they misrepresent the profits. Nowotny recalls, "I heard of one guy who had an offering and was telling people they would make back two to three times their initial investment. His reasoning was that 'Everyone knows you get two to three times your budget back on a negative pick-up.' Of course, when this doesn't happen, it puts the word out that film investment is flaky."

Katie Cokinos, another independent, produced fellow Texan filmmaker Eagle Pinnells' *Heart Full of Soul* and managed the Southwest Alternate Media Project's (SWAMP) Independent Produc-

tion Fund (IPF). Helping to distribute the IPF's almost \$47,000 in grant dollars gave her a look at a lot of independent films being made locally. She believes working in Texas is a double-edged sword. "The biggest problem is getting the money. You say 'film' and people want Hollywood. Investors in Texas are skittish because of the oil economy.

Film is a worse gamble than oil in most people's minds," Cokinos explains.

But there are advantages, too. Texas has a special cachet that can attract even the most jaded types. "It helps being from Texas sometimes," Cokinos says. "When we were trying to sell Eagle's *Last Night at the Alamo* and [Richard Linklater's]



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*Slacker*, the films got a lot of attention in Germany, France, and at the Independent Feature Film Market. When you say you're from Texas, people respond. There's that enchantment with Texas, like it's a never-never land."

*Slacker*, by Texas independent Richard Linklater, is the most recent local feature to gain wide recognition. This low-budget film unfolds within the bohemian community that has built up around the University of Texas at Austin. Like the traditional mythologies of cowboys and wildcatters, *Slacker* romances the folklore of Texas' recent history. Kennedy assassination conspiracy theories and the sniper shooting in 1966 that killed students walking past the university's main tower are obsessions of the anti-work-ethic slackers. The film goes from cafes and coffee shops to coops and clubs where these angst-ridden and aimless hipsters congregate. The making of *Slacker* points up one of the primary advantages for independents who remain in Texas: community cooperation.

Linklater says, "I was interested in working with a lot of people, and I became the ringleader for all this creative energy. The design of the movie was to leave places open for experimentation and improvisation." Linklater used both trained actors and a motley group of real-life slackers. For crew he relied on a core group of friends who worked for deferred salaries. The



Right to left: Director Richard Linklater, cinematographer Lee Daneil, and gaffer Clark Walker during the shooting of *Slacker*.

Courtesy filmmaker

director recalls, "I pulled in every favor I could. And if it hadn't worked out, I'd be back to zero. A film can ruin your life."

Linklater's feature-length film was made with a ridiculously low cash budget of \$23,000—an amount that would have been impossible in L.A. It was only possible in Austin because friends were donating bruised fruit from their jobs at the health food grocery, deferring pay, and giving up homes and cars for days to make sure the film got make.

After showing *Slacker* at European and domestic festivals in late 1990, Linklater sent the film to

John Pierson, an independent producers' rep. Pierson has gotten distribution deals for numerous independent hits, among them *Roger and Me* and *Stranger than Paradise*. Pierson liked the film and soon made a deal with Orion Classics for platform distribution. With the advance funds from Orion, Linklater and cinematographer Lee Daneil blew *Slacker* up to 35mm and redid the soundtrack. After its face-lift, *Slacker* went on to the Sundance Film Festival and the New Directors/New Films series at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. It opened theatrically in July.

In one year *Slacker* went from being a local

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catchword for all things bohemian and work-allergic to an arthouse film showing in 25 major markets. Ironically, Linklater had gone to New York a year earlier attempting to get financing for another project and returned empty-handed. "It was depressing to try to raise money and be treated like I didn't even exist," Linklater admits. "And I didn't. I'd never made a film that they would consider a film. Now, I suddenly have a lot of opportunities."

*Slacker's* success is a signal to other Texas filmmakers that there is a place for them in the gulf between the mainstream and the obscure. But, as independent writer/director Tom Ferlauto discovered, it's not always smooth sailing. When setting out to make his first feature, Ferlauto was hoping to establish himself in the industry and create a ticket to worry-free future financing. In January he and his partner/production manager Lu Gallup began shooting an action drama about the drug underworld called *Powder Play* in Austin. But Ferlauto's film ran aground for precisely the same reasons that *Slacker* did not. He hoped to get the film made based on the willingness of people to work for deferred salaries. Ferlauto financed his film through a deal with the distribution company World Wide Motion Pictures that guaranteed payment of deferred salaries, film stock costs, and equipment rental upon delivery of the film. He sold his film package to California-based producers Michael Carlin and Michel Myers with just this pitch.

Speaking to students at the University of Texas during preproduction, Ferlauto optimistically noted, "People are less jaded here. L.A. is probably the most anti-film city in the US by comparison. Here no one realizes what terrible things a film crew will do to your house. It's just more relaxed. In L.A. you have a union rule about a person who can turn a light switch and someone who can move a light stand. I want to make a film where the person closest to the switch turns it off."

Soon after production started, however, crew members spotted problems developing. Exploitive 20-hour work days with 12-hour turn-around times became common, and Byzantine political intrigues erupted between the producers from out of town and the local director. One crew member recalls, "There was definitely a line drawn between producers and crew. They started with the idea that we'd all be cooperating on the film, but we ended up feeling cheated—stabbed in the back."

Tensions mounted, and Ferlauto was eventually fired from his own film. The week of his dismissal, the producers called in the crew. One local who worked on *Powder Play*—or *Power Play*, as it became known among the disgruntled Texas crew—recalls, "They said they wanted everyone to stay on. 'It's your film,' they said. Then the next day they went down a list, and only three people were left who didn't excite the new director's insecurities. It was all pretty low-class." Rumors soon floated that crew members had hijacked a grip van full of equipment to insure that

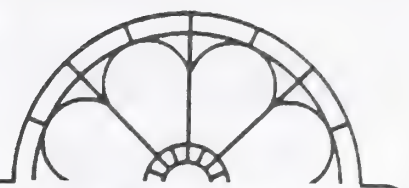
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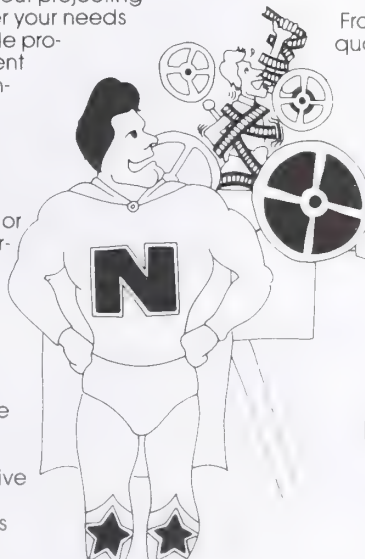
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they got paid, but counter-rumors suggested the producers had stolen the van themselves to get out of town. Dallas-based Paragon Pictures, the film's bonding agent, finally took over financing. So far, however, the crew hasn't been notified whether the film will be finished or not.

The bitter taste left by *Powder Play* has made the Texas film community take stock of itself. Ferlauto, for instance, does not buy the idea of Texas being a third coast—an oft-used phrase coined in the early eighties when the oil boom was still pumping billions into the economy—since most films come in from L.A. “Until it’s generated in-state, it’s not a third coast,” he asserts. But because of geographic obscurity, in-state productions have never really had access to big money. The development of Hollywood-style films and TV movies came only in the last 10 years. But independents rarely share in those dollars, mostly for aesthetic reasons but also because of lack of contacts. So by necessity local productions have earned a reputation for working with the community and getting made cheaply. Homegrown work has been boosted by the University of Texas at Austin, which has been turning out qualified people in sufficient numbers to create a crew population that can support the production of three to four films simultaneously.

In contrast to the hierarchical struggles of *Powder Play*, many in the local film community traditionally share equipment and work on one another's projects. *Slacker* was made completely through deferred salaries, and no one can recall any contracts being signed between crew members and Linklater's production company. Similarly, the first feature-length film by Houston filmmaker

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**Powder Play** was shot in and around Austin, but its out-of-town producers left a trail of bad memories among locals.

Photo: Marissa Dryden

Robert Ziebell, *This State I'm In*, tapped local resources, both technical and financial. "It was a collaborative effort—no script, only a storyboard—and it grew and grew from a 20-minute project to 40 minutes and finally to a feature-length film," Ziebell says.

At a screening of *This State I'm In* at the 1991 Independent Images conference in Austin, Ziebell explained, "It truly became a community thing. Everybody was wondering who would be asked to be in the film next. A lot of the Houston visual arts community helped finance this project. People were giving money in the spirit of the film, not to get a big return. In Texas, people have a tendency to be more generous with their time and energy. I could have never made this film in New York."

But negative experiences like Ferlauto's *Powder Play* are causing some to worry whether this generosity will continue to be exploited. *Slacker* and *This State I'm In* kept going financially and emotionally thanks to a network of friends. Few people regret the time they spent making these films. But students who worked on *Powder Play* say the attitude of good-natured camaraderie that holds a crew together became scarce on that set. The California producers seemed more intent on getting free labor than fostering a community of peers. Together with *Ballad of the Sad Cafe*, a recent Merchant-Ivory production which still has outstanding bills in Austin, *Powder Play* punctured many star-struck illusions about big-time filmmaking in the state.

But local filmmakers are still optimistic about Texas becoming a haven for independents. Admittedly, problems remain. The hostility that developed in response to recent exploitations may scare away out-of-town movies that are the bread and butter of freelancers. And supply houses and adequate labs are still few and far between. But conditions in Texas can also be advantageous. Far from the activity on either coast, a film can be nurtured here—with tenacity and friendships—in relative obscurity. What could be called the Texas tequila factor can mean a southwest film like *Slacker* surprises everyone with a shot glass full of truth that speaks for a generation. It remains to be seen whether the local production community can continue to eat the hallucinogenic tequila worm of the ever more commercial Texas film industry and still maintain its traditions of cooperation and support.

Kerthy Fix is a filmmaker living in Austin, Texas, currently working on preproduction for a documentary to be shot in Poland.

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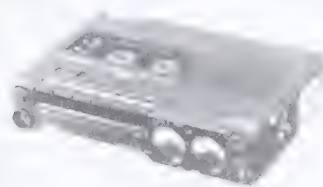
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waters of North America to see if it can have a role here, too.

TVE was established in order to advocate the concerns and agendas of environmental activists and create television that would, in their words, have "worldwide impact." Neither funder nor producer, the London-based group instead disseminates information on film and video dealing with the environment, acts as a catalyst for new productions, and, perhaps most importantly, facilitates the distribution of such work to developing countries. TVE's insistence on including Third World producers and audiences as equal partners in the world's media marketplace is one of their more interesting characteristics. Their methods have evolved over the years as TVE has learned, through trial and error, the obstacles and necessary steps.

TVE began with start-up money from Britain's Central Independent Television, one of the 15 regional stations making up the commercial ITV network. This was supplemented by production funds from the United Nations Environmental Programme. Currently, TVE is supported by over a dozen agencies, from the European Commission to UNICEF, the Swiss Foreign Ministry, and the World Wide Fund for Nature.

At its inception, the organization focused on getting environmental programs produced that emphasized development issues and relations between industrialized countries in Europe and the Third World. TVE helps create programs by originating ideas, finding partial funding, and making small start-up grants. They work in partnership primarily with Central Independent Television as well as other European broadcast companies, such as Germany's ZDF, but have also collaborated with broadcasters in Jordan, India, Zimbabwe, and Thailand, among other countries. For the upcoming *Developing Stories* series, TVE is considering proposals from producers in Burkina Faso, Brazil, the Philippines, and the Soviet Union.

After several years and many productions, TVE director Robert Lamb realized that there were "lots of outstanding films extant that weren't getting out," particularly to those developing countries that were often the programs' subjects. Similarly, films made in those countries were rarely seen elsewhere, and sometimes not even in their country of origin. In response, TVE began a unique distribution project called the Moving Pictures Service, intended to function as a clearinghouse for information and programming on the environment. In 1986, the service published *Switching on the Environment*, a critical directory of 100 films and videos from around the world, with information on how to obtain the programs.

Because of the directory's success, TVE decided to create a quarterly guide called the *Moving Pictures Bulletin*. The publication has grown from a fairly plain listing of titles to a 40-page, four-

**Moving Pictures Bulletin**, TVE's guide to films on development and the environment.

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color publication on slick (unfortunately unrecycled) paper. Each issue contains news on the environmental film scene, special surveys on such topics as "Green animation," the Mediterranean Sea, and Latin American media, plus information on festivals and works-in-progress. The *Moving Pictures Bulletin* generally includes descriptive listings of many European productions, a number from Africa, South America, and Asia, and occasionally a few from the US and Canada, with distribution information for each title. Published in English, French, and Italian (and soon in several other languages), around 10,000 copies of the *Bulletin* are currently distributed free in 117 countries. The magazine's readers include broadcasters, environmentalists, educators, NGOs, festival programmers, and producers. Listings from the *Bulletin* are also included in a thematic database of over 1,000 titles that is widely used by European environmental organizations.

Although the *Moving Pictures Bulletin* and database make information on environmental productions more readily available, Lamb recognizes the limitations of this "yellow pages" approach, as he describes it. Lamb points out that a broadcaster or organization in the Third World would have to be "really determined" to obtain programming from a foreign distributor, due to format and language differences, currency exchange rates, and rights negotiations, not to mention the price.

In addition, distributors and commercial TV sales outfits have traditionally made developing countries the last stop for First World programming. The result is that Third World countries have become the dumping ground for "job-lots of 10-year-old BBC productions," notes Lamb. To counter this pattern, TVE began using its leverage as coproducer to ensure the distribution of its programs outside Europe by securing Third World distribution rights at the outset. "We buy the rights from producers to distribute their films, free, in these markets," the *TVE News* brochure explains. In addition, some producers have donated their work to the service. This arrangement allows Third World broadcasters finally to pick and choose from high quality, up-to-date programs free of charge. Since starting the service, TVE has supplied more than 500 tapes to broadcasters and 1,000 tapes to other organizations in 38 countries.

Available titles are promoted through the *Moving Pictures Distribution Catalog*. The third edition lists over 50 current productions. Lamb says TVE is committed to making sure at least a third of the work they distribute is by Third World producers. An example from the current catalog is Marta Rodriguez' documentary on the Colombian flower industry, *Love, Women, and Flowers*. Programs listed in the catalog are available in all formats. Tapes can be obtained without a French or English narration track, allowing users to record a voiceover in their own language based on the accompanying transcript.

Despite the numbers, questions remain about TVE's effectiveness in reaching the right audiences with the right tapes. As Lamb points out,



"You can't talk about developing countries in general terms. Africa has a different media environment than South America or Indonesia, which has its own satellite." One problem TVE has to contend with is reaching audiences that either can't or don't watch broadcast television. To work around this, TVE has begun acquiring nontheatrical as well as broadcast rights and collaborating with organizations and NGOs to distribute VHS cassettes of programs relevant to particular regions. Funding has been obtained to help some of these organizations establish video lending libraries. Lamb believes this service is particularly important, presenting an alternative to other free media which tends to come from governments and have a propagandistic purpose.



TVE has been most successful bringing First World productions to the Third World. Support for Third World and Eastern European producers has lagged behind. As Lamb admits in *TVE News*, "Though we have been assiduous in involving Third World institutions and film crews, we have not done nearly enough to help directors make their own films." In an effort to redress this problem, TVE is linking up with the British Broadcasting Company to coproduce *Developing Stories*. This six-part series will consist of hour-long programs made by Third World and Eastern European producers—but with First World budgets



and resources, thanks to the BBC's participation. The series is targeted for broadcast just before the United Nation's 1992 Environmental Conference in Brazil.

TVE recently acquired Third World distribution rights for *Amazonia: Voices from the Rainforest*, by San Francisco-based filmmaker Glenn Switkes.

Courtesy filmmaker

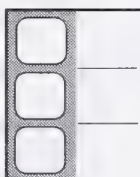
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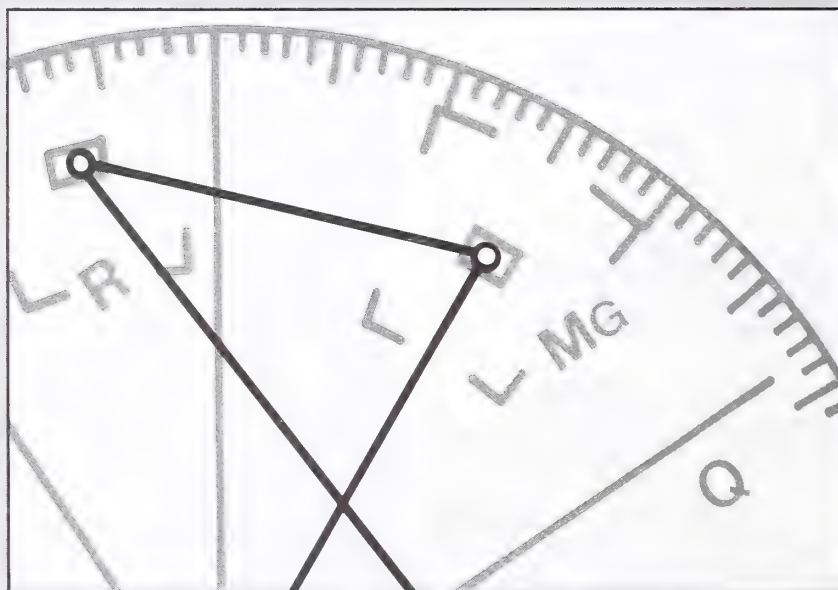
Meanwhile in the US, TVE is also developing key partnerships. So far television audiences have had the opportunity to see a number of TVE coproductions, mostly on public television. Recent broadcasts include *Decade of Destruction*; a Brazilian coproduction that explores 10 years of Amazon deforestation; *Profits from Poison*, a collaboration with Thai producers that examines the worldwide pesticide trade; *Can Polar Bears Tread Water?* on global warming; and *The Price of Progress*, a critical look at the World Bank's role in the ecology of the Third World.

A more significant inroad is the opening of a TVE office at the Public Broadcasting Service's headquarters outside Washington, D.C., earlier this year. It is part of a move to provide services in the States similar to those offered elsewhere. TVE is also studying the feasibility of a North American version of the *Moving Pictures Bulletin* as well as a US database that would be a comprehensive listing of environmental programs worldwide. Lamb adds that TVE is also interested in replicating its distribution service here. As a starting point, they recently acquired Third World distribution rights for *Amazonia: Voices from the Rainforest*, a documentary on indigenous people in the Amazon by San Francisco-based filmmaker Glenn Switkes.

"The documentary filmmaker is an endangered species," says Lamb, who sees TVE as an advocate for the continued viability of independent producers, especially in the eyes of funders. According to Lamb, funders need to be reassured that the independent productions they support will have adequate distribution and can compete in the changing media marketplace. TVE's position at the forefront of creative thinking about distribution was recently acknowledged by a \$19,300 research grant from National Video Resources, the Rockefeller Foundation-funded entity dedicated to expanding distribution and audiences for independent media. The grant will allow TVE to meet with various other private, corporate, and governmental funders from around the world to discuss improving nonbroadcast distribution of independent works. They will also create new model contracts for distribution rights that take into account markets opened by such developing technologies as interactive and compact video disks.

TVE's respect for the individual producer, as well as its innovative approach to distribution, leverage in the funding community, and desire to create global equity in media production and distribution may turn it into an important player on the US independent media scene. For more information on TVE in the US, contact: Halcyon Liew, Public Broadcasting Service, 1320 Braddock Place, Alexandria VA 22314-1698; (703) 739-5181.

*Kevin Duggan is an independent producer and editor of Safe Planet: The Guide to Environmental Film and Video, published by Media Network.*



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# WHAT THE MANUAL DIDN'T TELL YOU

## Audio Processing

RICK FEIST

*This article is tenth in a series written by staff members of the Standby Program, a nonprofit video access and education program dedicated to providing artists and independent producers with sophisticated video services they can afford. Standby's technicians are artists themselves and therefore offer vital understanding and sympathetic collaboration. Since 1983, works made possible by Standby have been broadcast on the Public Broadcasting Service, as well as European and Japanese television, and have been exhibited in museums and galleries worldwide. The information presented here and in future articles should help you make appropriate technical decisions to suit your aesthetic and budgetary needs. The previous chapters of this editing guide reviewed video recording formats, time code, off-line editing, switchers, digital video effects, titling methods, video painting systems, and audio for video.*

To process audio is to change it. In most cases, the intent is greater clarity for the spoken word. Often a naturalistic soundtrack entails extensive fabrication and mixing. To **sweeten** audio is to pass it through filtering and effects during the mix. Brightened and compressed, the sound from the speaker is penetrating.

Some of the artifice may be less necessary as digital audio establishes itself in both consumer products (hi-8s, CDs, DATs, etc.) and music and

Equalization is aspirin for sound, the standard prescription for common audio ailments.

sound production (MIDI systems controlled by PCs). Yet digital processing has also spawned a range of effects, such as time compression and sophisticated reverb. In sound studios, **digital audio workstations** (DAWs) are supplanting multitrack recorders. These computer systems function as both digital multitrack recorder and mul-

tichannel mixer and can be equipped with an arsenal of internal processing tools and direct access to a disk-based sound effects library. Hard disk storage allows nonlinear (random access) editing. Tracks are not built but called from memory on SMPTE time code cues. Slipping (off-setting) a track—impossible on a standard multitrack—is simple on a DAW.

But even the most capable tools available may prove quite useless against certain production mistakes. Off-mike recordings remain muffled (although differently), and distortion cannot be undone. Lowering hiss inevitably truncates the actual sound. A large budget can **foley** the dialogue, that is, have actors dub over the problem in a studio and then add the “natural” sounds. But clear sync sound that can be copied straight across (without filtering) is best, leaving time for more creative sound decisions.

Although the future of audio stands to be digital in nature, audio in video production demurs for the time being. The producer must instead rely on a variety of panaceas to surmount the limitations of analog recording systems. Some video studios may have none of these capabilities; most have some. You must ask before booking time.

### EQ

EQ (equalization) is aspirin for sound, the standard prescription for common audio ailments. The EQ capabilities of most mixing boards in video studios are rudimentary. EQ can vary the emphasis of the bass, treble, and mid-range. Skillful, small adjustments in the balance can make a voice crisper, a rumble quieter. Radical adjustments for sound problems introduce new problems.

EQ cannot perform miracles. Producers often expect EQ to homogenize sounds recorded on different occasions, such as a narrator's voice from various recording sessions. EQ may work a compromise, but the sound character of the separate readings will still contrast. Lowering hiss by means of EQ muffles the sound, because all the treble is reduced along with the hiss.

A **low-pass filter** cuts off all the audio above a certain frequency (e.g., 10,000 cycles), where hiss predominates and the human voice does not reach. A **high-pass filter** does the opposite, cutting off the lowest bass frequencies (60-200 cycles). A high pass eliminates the background rumble—street sounds with cars, industrial machines, etc.—without greatly affecting voice frequencies.

Stand-alone equalizers can more precisely balance the tonality of the audio signal. **Linear** (graphic) **equalizers** can adjust levels for a series of fixed frequencies. These rudimentary devices are never found in professional recording studios. A **parametric equalizer** allows the selection of specific frequency bands to be amplified or suppressed, as well as the width of the band (the number of neighboring frequencies) affected. Parametric equalizers are readily available at sound studios, but less often found in video studios.

### NOTCH FILTER

A notch filter (the most common is manufactured by Urei) allows for the exact stipulation of a frequency for sharp filtering. Place the notch correctly, and suddenly the sound of the humming refrigerator almost disappears. With any luck, the excised frequencies do not affect the other sounds on the track; usually a balance is achieved by compromise.

Some sounds notch better than others. An electronic hum with a constant, dominant pitch can be isolated and reduced, for example, but an oscillat-

Some sounds notch better than others. An electronic hum with a constant, dominant pitch can be isolated and reduced, for example, but an oscillating sound of varying frequency is too elusive.

ing sound of varying frequency is too elusive. Since all sounds produce overtones (resonant sound waves at higher frequencies), notch filters generally have two filters: one for the primary frequency and one for the first overtone. Adjusting the filter takes time, and each different take may require new settings.





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## PHASE

When two tracks of audio are recorded, either two-track mono or stereo, they must be **in-phase** with one another—that is, the audio waveforms on both tracks must move in parallel. If one track is inverted, the audio seems hollow or even disappears. If cables and equipment are properly wired, the correct phase is a mostly a matter of course.

Recording with two microphones can cause phase inversion and cancellation, depending on their placement. No problems result if the sound is taken from one track only, but mixing the two mikes will make out-of-phase audio sound quieter. Phase reversal is incorporated into many mixing boards, allowing them to invert an out-of-phase track and restore it to the proper phase.

## COMPRESSORS AND LIMITERS

Compressors and limiters control dynamic range. Limiters prevent overmodulation, automatically controlling the volume. If a sound is too loud, the limiter switches in and lowers the volume to an acceptable level. This is often audible in the suddenly flat sound of the limited audio. Home video and industrial grade equipment generally contain limiters for their ALC (automatic level controls). On industrial grade machines, you can generally turn them off.

Compressors are a more sophisticated means of dealing with limited dynamic range. These machines are common at radio stations and in the production of television commercials. They provide a steady full (loud) volume. By proportionally lowering the volume of sounds louder than a selected threshold level, a compressor reduces the dynamic range of the signal and creates headroom. The overall level can then be raised. The compression ratio is the degree of homogenization and can be adjusted for different sounds. A three-to-one compression ratio will reduce the

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A compander is a better solution to tape hiss, as well as a potential source of new problems.

---

volume of loud sounds by a factor of three. Although overall level can be raised concordantly, hiss and background noise also become more evident.

## EXPANDERS

An expander (a.k.a. **noise gate**) increases the dynamic range of a signal by amplifying louder sounds and driving the volume down as the sound

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grows soft. Expanders will lower the noise level (hiss) during quiet moments while providing full volume for a voice, the loudness of which makes the hiss less evident. Expanders often introduce **pumping**, in which the background level audibly swings louder and softer.

## COMPANDERS

A compander is a better solution to tape hiss, as well as a potential source of new problems. Also called **noise reduction**, the best known companders are the Dolby and DBX systems. A compander utilizes both a compressor and an expander. The sound is compressed when recorded on tape—**encoded**—and accordingly expanded during playback, or **decoded**. This lowers the audible hiss that would be added by the current recording, but does not affect any hiss present from previous generations. Sound band-aids for analog tape noise, companders do not clean out the hiss already present in a recording. They only prevent hiss from increasing in the current (encoded) recording.

Companders are everywhere in audio cassette recorders and home VCRs. But companders differ, and playback machines must be equipped with the identical system to decode the sound. An encoded recording played back without decoding will hiss severely. Conversely, decoding unencoded audio will dampen and muffle it. To some, even the best companders properly used produce audible audio distortion, a sound too crisp with treble.

Also, there is no means for a machine to automatically recognize whether audio on a tape has been encoded with a compander. On certain kinds of sound, it is often too difficult to judge the correct setting by ear. Whoever makes the recording should indicate on the box or tape casing the kind of noise reduction system used. This courtesy is rarely extended. Sometimes the Dolby is inaccessible. On some Betacam camcorders, the side of the camera must be unscrewed to locate the Dolby on/off switch. The cameraperson may not even know if the recording is Dolby.

Both DBX and Dolby offer a variety of incompatible, proprietary systems. Dolby A is the professional Dolby system found in teleproduction studios. It divides the frequency spectrum into four bands, equalizing each band for optimum recording characteristics. Dolby B was the original low-priced Dolby, utilizing the entire audio frequency spectrum as one band and reproducing the sound less accurately. Dolby C is an improved low-cost Dolby, dealing with the frequency spectrum as two separate bands. It is currently the standard Dolby in home video recorders, U-matic, and Betacam recorders.

Needless to say, Dolby A, B, and C are incompatible with each other: audio encoded Dolby A cannot be decoded by Dolby B. DBX offers a line of compander boxes, each its own system. Type 1 is the professional DBX. Again, a box of the same model must always accompany the recording for

Echo is now produced by digital reverb units, which allow settings that emulate different acoustics—concert halls, corridors, even rest rooms.

playback. One can only hope that digital audio obviates the need for companders.

## SPEED CHANGES

If analog audio is slowed down or sped up, it changes in pitch. Hence the chipmunk treble of fast forward or the plodding bass of slow motion. The **lexicon** is an ingenious digital audio device that restores the original pitch to a sound played back at a variable speed. The percentage of speed change from normal speed is used to convert the pitch back to its original frequencies. Overlength and underlength TV commercials use this machine to fit into their 30-second allotments. Speed changes of greater than 10 or 20 percent reach the limit of the credibility of the processed sound.

## REVERB

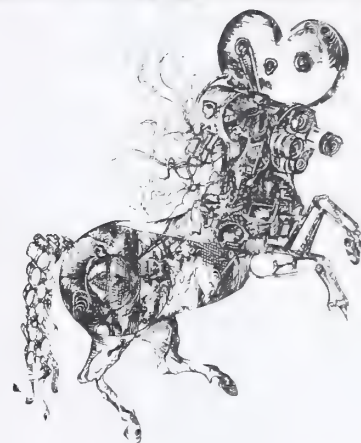
Reverb is echo. The traditional analog echo was a spring whose coils could thicken sound with a squeaky-door horror chamber quality. Echo was better done in an empty room with a good loudspeaker and a microphone fed to the mix. Now echo is produced by digital reverb units, which allow settings that emulate different acoustics—concert halls, corridors, even rest rooms. More sophisticated reverbs provide control of the delay and loudness of specific frequency bands. The result is an audio palette of simulated spatial effects.

## PRESENCE

Presence is the sound antithesis of echo, the sense of direct proximity to the source of the sound, such as a person talking. This is a product of good, close, and isolated (directional) microphone work. No postproduction technology can replace it or recreate it. Echo can always be added, but it's not so easily removed. With presence, you will not need to doctor the sound.

*Rick Feist works for the Standby Program.*

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# Jon Jost's Persistence of Vision

MANOHLA DARGIS

**J**ON JOST HAS NEVER SOUGHT ANONYMITY; IT'S BEEN THRUST UPON HIM. "I don't want to be famous," the filmmaker insists. "I just want to be able to work and not have it sit in my closet when it's all done." After decades of neglect, Jost is finally getting his due. For the last 28 years he's been making the kind of films that pop up at museums and universities rather than malls and multiplexes. His shorts, features, and documentaries are spiky, irreverent, always smart, and sometimes brilliant. Whether it's an out-of-work drifter or a high-stakes trader, Jost's films are about marginalized people who struggle through difficult, prosaic lives—just the type of subject that's anathema to the cash-box mentality of the US movie industry.

But this year is different for Jost. He has two new features in the can—*All the Vermeers in New York* and *Sure Fire*—for which he is currently seeking commercial distribution. During the first part of the year several retrospectives were organized, including one at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City and another at the University of California, Los Angeles Film and Television Archive. Topping it off, Jost was recognized with two prestigious awards, the Berlin Film Festival's Caligari Film Prize and the John Cassavetes Lifetime Achievement Award, a noncash award doled out

by the Independent Feature Project/West. And, if all that wasn't exhausting enough, in April Jost went behind the camera again, beginning production on his twelfth feature. For someone who's managed to escape notice for almost three decades, it's been a very busy year.

Neither avant garde nor Hollywood, his films fall into that nebulous class commonly tagged independent. It's a label Jost is at pains to reject. Forget avant garde, forget independent, he says. These names, Jost insists, are "just a way to ghettoize you." Two years ago, speaking before an audience in Lisbon, he declared that "To accept the mythos of such 'independence,' whether individually or as a cultural voice, is to invite a kind of suicide. It is not something to celebrate; rather, it is something to be resisted." For this filmmaker, his preferred identity is simply—filmmaker.

It's in this respect that Jost can be seen as more closely aligned with the political avant garde in Europe, represented by directors like Godard and Straub/Huillet. Unlike the US avant garde and its tradition of handmade, personal filmmaking, the European model has always sought a larger audience, often as a matter of ideological imperative. Even if Godard once gave lip service to home movies being the future of "real" political filmmaking, no one could ever mistake his internationally distributed features—even at their most arcane—for the work of Stan Brakhage. Of course, these days it's almost as impossible to see Godard's most recent films as it is to see Jost's. In the latter's case, however, it's more a question of industry myopia than a filmmaker who seems to have lost his following. "My films," says Jost, "aren't difficult to look at. Many people, literally billions, could look at them."

Ironically, the label "independent" truly makes sense for Jost's brand of filmmaking. He's never looked to Hollywood for support, financial or otherwise. But neither has he pursued the public funding alternatives that other independent filmmakers commonly target. It wasn't until 1985 that he received his first production grant. What has allowed Jost to sustain his singular vision is living on the cheap, friends, short-term teaching gigs at places like New York's Millennium Film Workshop, and the occasional grant. His budgets are ridiculously, admirably economical, running from a



*Sure Fire*, Jon Jost's most recent feature, is a dark tale about patriarchy set in a remote town in Utah.

All photographs courtesy Complex Corporation.



*Last Chants for a Slow Dance (Dead End)* (above), a chilling and desolate road movie set in Montana, begins Jost's triptych about disenfranchised people.

*Bell Diamond* presents the story of a Vietnam vet whose wife leaves him after seven years.

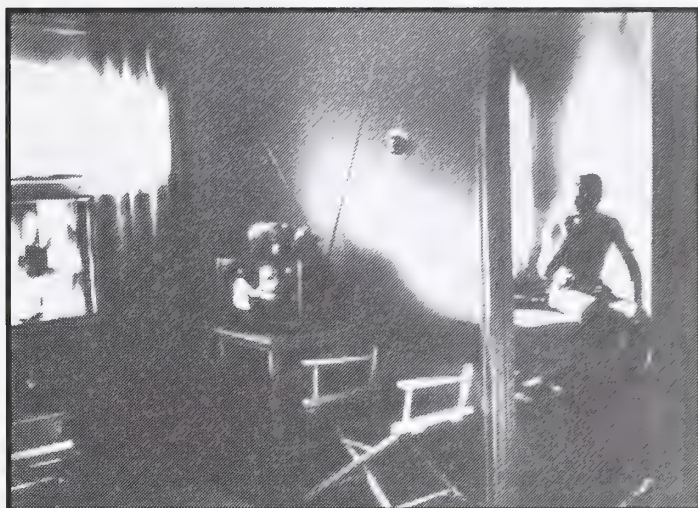
staggeringly low \$3,000 for the feature *Last Chants for a Slow Dance (Dead End)* (1977) to \$50,000 for his feature-length documentary *Plain Talk and Common Sense (Uncommon Senses)* (1988).

Part of what keeps Jost's budgets so modest is that he generally shoots with a crew of only two or three, with himself behind the camera. "Usually my crew is somebody I just taught how to read a VU meter," he adds. This year's *All the Vermeers in New York* was budgeted at \$240,000—twice Jost's previous high—thanks to financing from American Playhouse. The extra money allowed him to shoot in 35mm and employ both a soundperson and his first-ever assistant camera, yet another cozy threesome. Although he enjoys the advantages of professional help, Jost remains fluid about his options. For the film currently in production, an untitled project about himself and his friends, Jost returns to a bare bones budget of \$50,000.

While thrifty-minded producers might admire Jost's ability to make a \$240,000 feature look like a million, there's more than frugality at issue here. For Jost, small budgets fly in the face of the highly industrialized process we call the movie business. It's the kind of anti-industry thinking he brings to his workshop stints. While Jost refuses to teach filmmaking for the long haul, he enjoys his brief incursions. "I like to do them," he explains, "because it's a good political platform to make people think differently." Although the lesson may be hard for some to swallow, it's not difficult to understand. "Basically, if you can just get people to quit thinking about the million dollars they need," Jost explains, "you have effected a political victory." He adds, "Money is not the problem; what's going on in your head is the problem."

JOST'S PERSONAL HISTORY IS INELUCTABLY BOUND UP IN THE FABRIC OF HIS films. Born in 1943, the son of a military man, he spent much of his youth being shuttled around the globe. He was an army scion who became a college dropout, a nomad, a filmmaker in 1963, then a draft resister, and, finally, a convicted felon for resisting the service. Released in 1966 after two years in prison, Jost took up filmmaking again and went on to shoot 15 shorts in 16mm. These ranged from delicate portrait studies to the witty gaming of structural films reminiscent of avant gardists like George Landow.

It wasn't until his first feature-length film, *Speaking Directly (Some American Notes)*, made in 1973, that Jost's work began to attract critical notice. The film is a wildly ambitious, vertiginous swirl of assorted topics from filmmaking to femininity. *Speaking Directly* is ultimately about the Vietnam War. The topic comes up repeatedly as both terrible reality and supreme trope. But the film is as memorable for the audacious, even arrogant, presence of its maker as for its intellectual pyrotechnics. In his feature debut Jost all but bursts with messianic fervor. In one fascinating moment one of his disgusted friends suggests—on-camera—that the film audience would be well-advised to walk out, just as he does, leaving us alone with the filmmaker. This in-your-face kind of attitude is perhaps one reason why *Speaking Directly* has never settled comfortably into the unofficial pantheon of alternative film. Although it now enjoys critical respect, it wasn't publicly screened in New York City until six years after completion—and then, Jost points out, during Christmas season at the Whitney Museum of American Art.



After a three-year hiatus, Jost returned to filmmaking with *Angel City* (1976). It's a sharp, clever send-up of both Chandleresque detective fiction and the city most closely identified with that style, Los Angeles. The next year Jost shot *Last Chants for a Slow Dance (Dead End)*, a film that marks a radical departure in tone from his first two features and initiates the beginning of a remarkable series about disenfranchised people. Jost's loose triptych—*Last Chants*, *Slow Moves* (1983), and *Bell Diamond* (1985)—each mine a Raymond Carver-like landscape of slag heaps and shuttered factories with vérité precision. Cast with both amateurs and professionals, these post-westerns have a gritty, documentary texture, as if the subjects from a Maysles or Wiseman film had somehow stumbled into a fictional frame. Gone is the radical, if strident, voice of *Speaking Directly*, the clever allusions of *Angel City*. And while Jost employs some special effects, including superimpositions and intervolumeter sequences, it's his use of real time and improvisation that sets these films apart from so much mainstream chaff. Jost's characters consistently feel like real people going through authentic situations, no matter how forceful or quixotic the fiction.

In *Last Chants* an out-of-work drifter roams through a chain of banal episodes—a chat in a diner, a bar pickup, sex accompanied by a TV blaring. Then, for no apparent reason, he murders a motorist whose car has broken down. In *Slow Moves* an unemployed steeplejack tries to rob a grocery with a toy gun and is shot to death while his girlfriend waits in their car. The violence in both films isn't art directed; it's unexpected, visceral. There's a casual, even wanton, randomness to these grim moments that makes them all the more frightening and desperately tragic. In *Bell Diamond*, a Vietnam vet's minor apocalypse happened years before, but he's still paying the price. Like the steeplejack and the drifter, the vet is unable to express himself





Tom Blair as Wes, an intense, provincial Travis Bickle-like character, in *Sure Fire*.

through words. He languishes, watching television, unable to communicate with his confused, unhappy wife. There's a kind of inchoate pathology to these men (and, to a far lesser extent, women). When they dialogue it's in the sluggish stumble of people without the privilege of language, whose lives are a disjointed tangle of lost connections and missed moments.

To a great extent this unreliability of language is born out of Jost's working methods. Since *Angel City* in 1976, Jost goes into production without a written script or storyboards. Instead, he relies in large part on his actors to create not only their characters, but the flow of the film as well. Jost sketches out the parameters of the proposed film, then turns to his actors and asks, "What's your character? You're responsible for it." In opposition both to industrial moviemaking and the auteurist bias of mainstream criticism, Jost conceives of his films as collaborative processes. It's one of the reasons he disdains the word "director," a term he likens to that of a traffic cop. Whether he's casting professionals or amateurs, Jost remains sure of his unorthodox approach. "I don't rehearse. I just sit around with the cast and talk with them. I say, 'Here, think about this. Come back to me in a couple of days, and show me what you've thought about. Then I'll tell you the scenes that fit in.'"

This is the kind of approach that gives a special *vérité* edge to films like *Slow Moves*, with its scenes of the lovers groping toward conversation. But it's also a strategy that can be difficult for a filmmaker to manage. For instance, a week into production of *Sure Fire*, Jost's newest feature which is currently making the rounds on the festival circuit, Jost found himself facing "terrific resistance" from a cast who believed they didn't have a script because their director was "lazy." "It was not a happy time for them or for me," Jost admits.

The film, which Jost calls "a poison valentine to my father," is about an obsessed, monomaniacal businessman who is inexorably led to a tragic, unspeakable act of brutality. *Sure Fire* contains a number of lengthy monologues delivered with numbing intensity by Tom Blair, who plays a kind of provincial Travis Bickle. A stage actor, Blair refused to improvise the longer monologues, according to Jost, and demanded that the filmmaker write them down. The resulting speeches "were against my will," claims Jost, who nonetheless describes Blair as "a very good actor." The result, a torrent of words, is not the faltering silence of *Bell Diamond*, which Jost originally considered the model for the newer work. "*Sure Fire* isn't at all the film I intended to make, but that's normal for the way I work." It's easy to believe that the tense relations between Jost and his cast is what gives the film its raw intensity and feeling of suppressed rage.

If *Sure Fire* and *All the Vermeers in New York* seem different from Jost's earlier work, it's partly because they were shot in 35mm. As a consequence, there's a rich, glossy texture that gives this newer work more of a commercial look than the previous features. But the decision to go with 35mm was

pragmatic. Jost explains the move as an acknowledgment of the fact that 16mm is undergoing a slow but certain fadeout. While Jost prefers the smaller gauge, he says he isn't about to let Kodak determine the future exhibition prospects for his films. "I'm here for the long haul."

Despite the upgrade, Jost continues to work small and light. "When I made *All the Vermeers* I had a 35mm camera sitting on top of a super 8 tripod. You couldn't tilt, but you could pan." And although grants and sales to outlets like Britain's Channel Four have pushed up recent budgets, Jost remains dedicated to filmmaking at the lower end of the scale.

If Jost continues to make films in relative albeit diminishing obscurity, it's a function of both his dedication and his ability to exist on the margins. "I don't have a problem being poor. Basically, I spend all my money on filmmaking stuff. Besides minimal tools, I don't own anything—I don't have an apartment, I don't have a car. And when I spend money, it's for tools, films, tape, whatever."

Like Godard, with whom he shares certain thematic concerns, Jost is engaged in reaching cinema's wider audiences without artistic compromise. It's what originally led him away from the short form to feature-length films. It's also what marks his filmmaking as a profoundly political act. Beyond his working-class outcasts, lost souls, and critique of America, it is ultimately Jost's resolve to make accessible, feature-length films outside the mainstream that brands the work and maker as radical. "Political is what you do everyday," Jost observes. "What I do everyday is say, 'No, the system is not correct. You can make good things with little bits of money, and little people should be able to speak instead of not being able to speak.' Now more than ever, there are those who can finally listen to Jon Jost, speaking directly."

*Manohla Dargis is a New York based freelance writer.*



In *All the Vermeers in New York*, a frazzled Wall Street stock broker (Stephen Lack) finds solace—and a new love interest—in the Vermeer room at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.





# The Bottom Line

## Funding for Media Arts Organizations

DON ADAMS AND ARLENE GOLDBARD

**T**HIS ISSUE OF *THE INDEPENDENT* INAUGURATES A SERIES OF ARTICLES designed to bring into sharper focus the widespread changes in media funding, production, distribution, and exhibition. Consider some of the developments reshaping the field:

❖ Twenty years ago, the desire for access to media equipment spurred the growth of media arts centers and cable access. Today, camcorders are household items. Products like Newtek's Video Toaster and inexpensive digital switchers make highly sophisticated postproduction tools widely available at a fraction of their earlier cost. Are the most significant improvements in access to media tools now happening outside media arts and cable access centers?

❖ As public television seeks to become more competitive with the commercial channels, it is moving toward centralized production, funding, and scheduling. How will this affect independents? And how will programs funded by the recently established Independent Television Service (ITVS) fit into public television's reconfigured structure, schedule, and strategy?

❖ Cultural consumption is increasingly happening at home, thanks to VCRs and cable. What role will traditional exhibition venues play in the future? Distributors of independent works now find themselves competing with large commercial distributors, whose low-priced videos are encroaching on their turf. How must independent distributors evolve in order to compete while maintaining their distinctive profiles and mission?

❖ Multimedia hardware that integrates digital video into personal computer programs will soon put video applications on desktops. What will media literacy mean when video becomes a common office tool, handled the way millions of today's workers use texts or spreadsheets?

❖ Amateur video is gaining increased visibility and acceptance on network television, local news programs, and even in video stores. Are the old barriers of "broadcast quality" finally coming down?

Over the next year *The Independent* will present a series of articles that trace and interpret such changes in field. Some, such as the report excerpted in this issue, will be source documents. Others will be essays that interpret these developments and suggest responses.

The poet Wendell Berry suggested that to flee from realities is to arrive at them unprepared. We hope this series will help independents size up the changes in the field and meet the 1990s with a revised and renewed sense of the cultural role played by independent mediamakers and the institutions that serve them.

—Andrew Blau, guest editor



*Last fall the National Alliance of Media Arts Centers (NAMAC) surveyed its members in order to develop a snapshot of media arts funding. This was prompted by the political attacks on the National Endowment for the Arts,*

*the deep cuts in state and local arts budgets, and the death of MacArthur Foundation chair William Kirby, who was widely regarded as the leading force behind the philanthropic giant's interest in the media arts.*

*Funded by NAMAC and conducted by consultants Don Adams and Arlene Goldberg, the study, excerpted below, is based on a survey completed by 47 organizations, interviews with 22 people in the field, including public and private funders and "media arts organizers," and a variety of background materials. The report's first section, not included here, describes the diverse field of media arts organizations. The study also includes profiles of 10 media arts centers ranging from Appalshop to Film Arts Foundation to Third World Newsreel. Designed to educate current and potential funders about the state of the field, the full report is available for seven dollars from NAMAC, 1212 Broadway, Suite 816, Oakland, CA 94612; (415) 451-2717.*

### *The Funding Landscape*

MEDIA ARTS ORGANIZATION LEADERS ARE UNDERSTANDABLY OBSESSED BY the topic of funding. Their counterpart organizations in other countries might have two or three funding agencies to appeal to for their appropriations and a reasonably stable base of support from year to year, often grounded in explicit public policy. For media arts organizations in the US today, fundraising is a full-time occupation, necessitating special appeals to a variety of public agencies, private and corporate foundations, and individual donors.

A notable pattern emerged in the course of this study: for participants who were knowledgeable about the field, questions of funding seemed to be significantly a matter of the personalities of key individuals. A few names were mentioned over and over again—directors of public funding programs, board members, advisors, and program officers of foundations. Questions were repeatedly raised that had more to do with personal psychology than with programs of philanthropy. People found it difficult to abstract a clear notion of policy from the grantmaking decisions of most funding agencies. In short, many agreed with one interviewee who said, "Funding policy is always personality-driven."

They therefore emphasized the need for personal contact with funders—and cited the low level of organizational resources in the field as an obstacle. As one experienced media arts organizer put it, "No one has the staff for a consistent funding effort. We tend to go in bursts. We make a funding push, and programs suffer; concentrate on programs again, and vice versa. This inconsistency sends a terrible message, but few groups can afford development directors."

Participants in this study characterized the media arts organization field as being in a state of financial crisis. To some extent, this reflects the shortage of funding that currently besets nonprofit organizations of many kinds: cuts or flat budgets in the public agencies that historically have supported them, rising costs, tax policies that provide far less incentive for private giving than was the case before the Reagan era, investment losses

*For those on the outside,  
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ever-shrinking membership, and  
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far-reaching economic consequences.*

that have reduced some foundations' grants capital.

This general tendency has been exacerbated for media arts groups by unfortunate timing: the period of greatest development of interest in the media arts field has coincided almost exactly with the "era of limits." One interviewee summed up the heightened consciousness of financial insecurity expressed by many study participants. "Even traditional government funders seem to be in jeopardy. I'd always assumed stable government funding—that it had hit a ceiling and we needed to develop to the next level with the foundations and corporations. Now these old assumptions have to be questioned. A shock wave is running through the field."

Public support has been crucial to the development of the media arts field. In the early days of media arts organization development, groups were able to secure resources through an alphabet soup of federal programs. CETA (Comprehensive Employment and Training Act), the locally-administered federal program for job creation and training, enabled many public service cultural programs and sustained much alternative media work. Other crucial program support came via a number of youth-oriented programs providing summer employment and training to keep young people out of trouble. ESEA and ESAA—the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the Emergency School Aid Act programs of the department of Health, Education, and Welfare—spawned many media production activities. None of these programs provided support for media arts organization development per se, but media arts groups could find a confluence of interests with these funders—a place where their aims and these social programs coincided—thus releasing resources for their work.

This has changed drastically in the Reagan-Bush era, however. All the above programs were terminated or deployed away from their original focus on public service early in 1981, in the first round of federal cuts which ushered in a new climate in public support for media arts. Since the 1980s, federal support for media arts programs has come almost exclusively from arts, humanities, and broadcasting agencies. Just 1.4 percent of the 1990 income reported by survey respondent groups came from federal sources other than the National Endowment for the Arts.

### *National Endowment for the Arts*

The most important source of federal support for media arts organizations has been the NEA, despite the fact that, in the words of one interviewee, the agency's appropriations "have barely increased in over a decade, which effectively means 50

percent cuts. And now its funding will fall in absolute terms, making things even worse."

The NEA has a significant and important impact which goes far beyond the \$11-million distributed in FY 1990 grant funds through its Media Arts program (including \$1.64-million in the media arts centers grants category and \$482,000 in the national services category, which also supports media arts organizations). As one survey respondent put it, "Whichever way the wind is blowing, most foundations, corporations, and philanthropists follow the lead of the Endowment."

This has been perceived as both an advantage and a disadvantage. It is widely thought that the NEA imprimatur acts as a powerful magnet to other funders. Those receiving Endowment funding can point to it as providing some assurance that an organization is deemed significant enough to warrant support from the federal agency. The disadvantage is that as federal arts budgets have tightened, it has become harder and harder for additional groups to obtain NEA support.

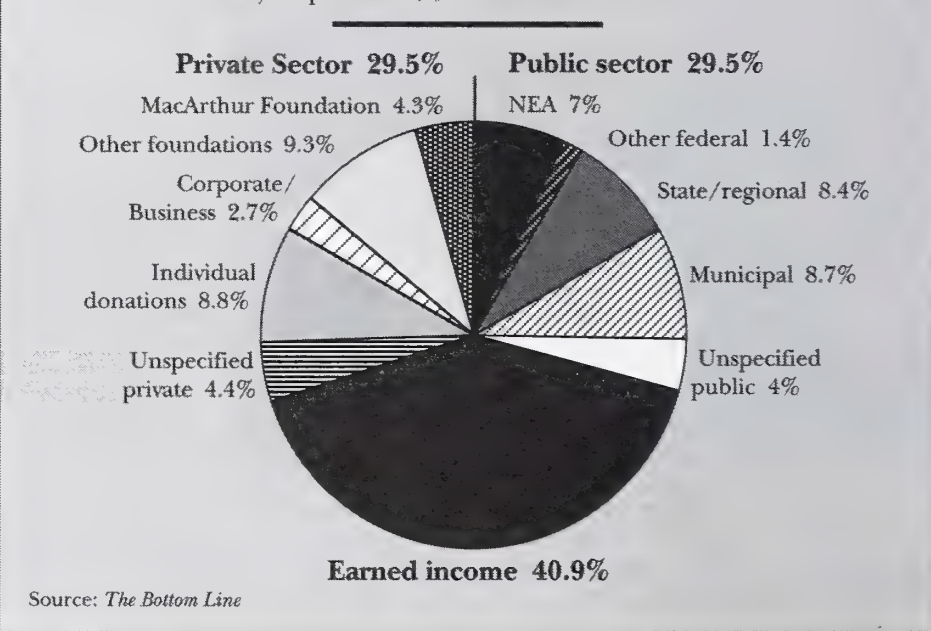
For those on the outside, the pool of grantees can seem like an exclusive club with an ever-shrinking membership, and denial of admission is seen as having far-reaching economic consequences.

### *The Media Arts Development (MAD) Fund*

NAMAC's new regranteeing program, the Media Arts Development (MAD) Fund, was undertaken late in 1990 in response to an initiative by the Endowment's Media Arts Program. Some \$250,000 in NEA funds were

### **Funding Sources of Media Arts Organizations**

40 survey respondents, \$15.6-million total for FY 1990





distributed early in 1991 in grants to 54 organizations (nearly half characterized as multicultural) "to increase support for small, emerging, and culturally diverse organizations and to help stabilize existing arts organizations."

While many members of the field welcome the existence of a funding pool that targets smaller groups, eliminating competition with large, established institutions, the primary concern raised by a group of representatives of MAD Fund applicant organizations previously rejected by the NEA (and echoed by a number of survey respondents) was that

It is disturbing to us that the groups that have been "referred" to NAMAC reside on the periphery of cultural expression—whether because of our emphasis on art by people of color, gays and lesbians, or other groups perceived as "marginal" by the mainstream, or because of our commitment to formally innovative work. It seems to us a negative development that the NEA will now focus its support on large, mainstream organizations, while NAMAC will take care of the "others."

But the blue-ribbon panel of media arts organization experts\* assembled to review this first round of MAD Fund applications and evaluate the advisability of NAMAC's continuing the fund concluded that "the MAD Fund was good for NAMAC and the media arts field." The NAMAC Board committee assessing the process noted that it had "succeeded in distributing funds to organizations that have never been recognized by the National Endowment for the Arts," responding to one of the main concerns about the NEA expressed by survey respondents.

Acting on the recommendation by the committee overseeing the fund, NAMAC's Board has resolved to continue its stewardship of the MAD Fund, attempting at the same time to raise additional resources for the fund from other sources.

### State Arts Agencies

While the NEA's overall budget has failed even to keep pace with inflation, state arts agencies (SAAs) have come to occupy a large place in the overall scheme of arts funding. What this means for media arts organizations depends a great deal on where they happen to be situated. In FY1987, only \$8-million in SAA grants (less than four percent of the total) went to media arts (including production grants and fellowships), a total of 910 grants for the entire country. In FY1988, the latest year for which aggregate figures are available, only three percent of the total appropriation (\$8.4-million) went to media arts, and that amount was spread among 1,522 grantees, many for individual (rather than organizational) projects.

Historically, there have been several obstacles to state arts agency funding of media projects. Production-related proposals have tended to scare off the SAAs, seeming expensive, technical, and therefore risky and hard to evaluate. In most states, media arts organizations have applied in general organizational grants categories, where they compete with galler-

ies, dance and theater companies, music organizations, and so on. Only a handful of SAAs are seen as having a real commitment to media arts—notably Ohio, South Carolina, and New York.

### Local Government Support

Local government funding—city or county grants—accounted for a slightly higher percentage of the aggregate public support received by the survey sample than was contributed by either the NEA or SAAs, providing nearly \$1.5-million to these 40 groups in 1990 (8.7 percent of their total revenues). More municipal support came to the larger-budget organizations in the study sample: local government contributed 8.4 percent of the budgets of below-the-median groups, while larger organizations received 9.1 percent of their seven-times-larger aggregate income.

With the exception of major urban centers, grant amounts tend to be small. A few groups receive grants from local tourism promotion agencies to support their exhibition programs or festivals, events that are seen as helping to attract visitors to the community. Cable authorities are frequent contributors to media arts programs, through access to facilities and equipment if not for outright financial support.

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*The MacArthur Foundation's grants to media arts organizations represent the only substantial new cash infusion the field has received in years.*

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### Foundations

As government funding has proven less and less adequate to finance the growth of the media arts organization field, the spotlight has shifted to private sector philanthropy and earned income. Foundations have played a leading though limited role in media arts organization funding; survey respondents reported that developing support from this sector is their most important fundraising strategy.

One private foundation stands out in its impact on media arts organizations: The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. The MacArthur Foundation's support for media arts organizations rose from a total of \$877,500 in FY1987 (48 grants) to \$2-million in FY1991 (59 grants ranging from \$15,000 to \$110,000). The MacArthur Foundation's grants to media arts organizations represent the only substantial new cash infusion the field has received in years, having come at a crucial time for a number of long-established organizations.

"The MacArthur Foundation came along at a critical time in the development of the media arts," said one respondent. "Reductions in government funding of human services created an extra burden on foundations and corporations. Many were forced to reduce their arts funding, which of

\* This panel included Claire Aguilar, UCLA Film and Television Archive, now with KCET Los Angeles; Linda Blackaby, Neighborhood Film and Video Project; Cheryl Chisolm, Atlanta Third World Film Festival; independent producer Michelle Valladares; and Jack Wright, Ohio University, Athens. The NAMAC board representative was Edward Hugetz.

course means the media arts, as one of the newest and least understood art forms, was cut first. Had the MacArthur Foundation not come forth at the moment that it did, the media arts field would quite possibly not exist in its current form."

When asked to list which media arts funders are most important and influential, four organizations named the Rockefeller Foundation, noting its seminal role in the field during the seventies and early eighties in putting forward a definition of a "media arts center" and supporting those pioneering organizations which fit it. Other foundations singled out by survey respondents were the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, a newcomer to the media arts field (in its two grants cycles to date it has given a total of \$768,000), the Ford Foundation, the Benton Foundation, the Paul Robeson Fund for Film and Video (of the Funding Exchange), the J. Roderick MacArthur Foundation, and the Jerome Foundation.

### Earned Income

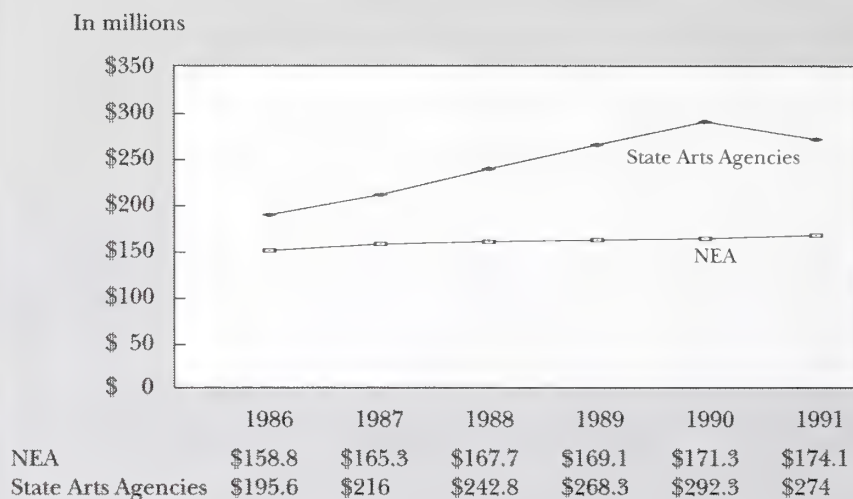
In the aggregate, the 40 organizations reporting complete financial data in the survey earned \$6.4-million through membership fees, ticket sales, workshop fees, equipment use fees, and distribution of tapes and films (40.9 percent of their income of \$15.6-million). In the last decade or so there's been a kind of national campaign to persuade nonprofit organizations, including media arts organizations, to increase their earnings, and to a certain extent they have.

A few people are banking on expanding earned income. For most, this is a matter of stepping up and refocusing their efforts on income-generating aspects of their operations and working to improve promotion of their use. But by and large, participants in this study did not see much reason to imagine that earned income would substantially increase, for a variety of reasons. Many media arts groups' chosen purposes effectively place a ceiling on their earnings potential: they came into being to serve people who were living under conditions of poverty, in communities defined in part by shared injustice and in part by shared struggle for equity and autonomy; and

*"When you look at a lot of the groups that get funded [through multicultural initiatives], you see the 'plantation model'—the same power base, but people of color in strategic, visible positions."*

## Federal versus State Funding Levels

Total appropriations, all grant categories



Sources: NEA and National Association of State Arts Agencies

they do not expect to realize significant income from those same people. They see their work as a form of public service as well as art and their fundraising task as primarily one of securing resources from public agencies and private philanthropies.

Other groups find it necessary to expend so much money and effort in order to sell tickets or memberships that the enterprise is self-cancelling from a financial standpoint. As one interviewee put it:

I'm pretty demoralized about the future. One hundred new members get us \$3,500—you know how hard we have to work for that. And I just lost \$3,400 from the NEA in one fell swoop. I don't have to pull back on workshops, because costs are low, but screenings cost money. We've never been able to get more than a small audience for presenting experimental artists and their work. I always felt it was one of the things we were subsidized to do, but with all these cuts, I now have to count box office against costs, and it's affecting our program.

### The Problem of Categories

Many media arts organization leaders feel trapped between categories. On the one hand, central to their work are the production, exhibition, and distribution of works of art in sound and moving image media. On the other hand, many are fundamentally concerned with democratization of the media and engaged with issues of access, representation, and education, as well as with other social issues facing the communities they serve.

For the organizations that espouse them, there is nothing incompatible about these goals. But as the constellation of funders has developed in this country, artistic and social aims are often seen as distinct and unrelated.

Those media arts organizations that have successfully positioned themselves as arts institutions, whether as free-standing groups or as part of larger arts institutions such as museums, tend to be located in major urban centers with a critical mass of active public and private arts funders. Successful groups based in marginalized communities, rural communities, or regions of the country where resources are particularly scarce are much more likely to define and position themselves as multifaceted, active in both the social and artistic arenas.

### Supporting Multicultural Media Development

The problem of getting a full hearing and being recognized for the full range of their intentions and activities is particularly frustrating for groups that



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*"There are a few million camcorders out there now. How do media arts centers fit in? As editing centers for public use? As downlink centers? When they figure that out, it will bring new money, new ideas, and new blood into the field."*

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relate primarily to people of color. These groups' agendas necessarily tend to be more encompassing: improving (and countering) portrayals of people of color in the mass media; empowering and assisting people to work as media artists, multiplying opportunities for participation by people of color in all dimensions of the media; helping community members to understand and participate in the media as critical consumers; expanding distribution of media works by and about people of color—in short, fulfilling key roles in the great national transition to a more truly multicultural society.

While there is a good deal of talk about "multiculturalism" on the part of funders, survey respondents from organizations based in such communities are skeptical: "Many funders put out the word that they are seeking the works of minority artists organizations to support, but we have to face the fact that most recipients are white majority," wrote one study participant. Another person described a demoralizing situation: "There's an illusion that funding bodies are giving more money to multicultural groups, in part because they use that statement of priority as an excuse to reject other applicants, which leaves the false impression that multicultural organizations are getting it all. When you look at a lot of the groups that get funded, you see the 'plantation model'—the same power base, but people of color in strategic, visible positions."

### ***Pressures to Consolidate***

Some interviewees suggested consolidation of facilities as an intelligent solution to the otherwise daunting problem of providing access to up-to-the-minute media technologies. They foresaw media arts centers, educational institutions, and cable access facilities pooling their production and postproduction resources and coming up with one well-equipped and well-maintained shared facility. So long as the community's size and structure enable optimal use of a single facility, this could be a workable—and fundable—idea. One funder endorsed it in these terms: "The idea of the stand-alone media arts center may have had its day, 19 years after the NEA entered the field. We need to look at other alternatives to sustain and expand organizations and make their mission better understood."

But a number of participants complained that the pressure to consolidate and collaborate seemed largely a matter of funders' desire to reduce demand.

### ***Support from Social-Issue Funders***

For many of those who foresee traditional arts funders offering little new support for media arts, the greatest possibility lies in emphasizing the exciting potential of media in broader social contexts. One interviewee envisioned a new identity for media arts organizations

as laboratories to address enormous issues that haven't been addressed in media

formats. Could a consortium of environmental groups fund media arts centers to provide a lab for developing media approaches to environmental issues? Could media arts centers connect with major foundation grantees to address their problems? Could foundations support media arts centers to develop new ways of approaching issues important to them? Ford and C.S. Mott have programs to improve community foundations: could media arts centers develop partnerships with community foundations to explore the role of media within their communities? Rockefeller's Equal Opportunity Division invests millions of dollars to strengthen community organizations: can media arts centers be part of this?

Several groups participating in his study have already obtained support for creating media products that advance particular foundations' social goals or help spread the word about worthwhile projects. But given the present support picture, the obstacles are also formidable. Most media arts groups are scrambling full-time to raise even basic operating support; many would describe themselves as lacking the creative space and planning time to make the contacts and develop the initiatives that can lead to such collaborations. The word "laboratory" in the quotation above seems particularly apt, because no one knows exactly how these new organizational alliances would work. Without the luxury to experiment—which means the capital to buy time—there's no reason to believe they'll ever get off the ground.

Community development and issue-oriented organizations also lack sophistication about potential uses of media, so that the idea of such collaborations might not yet have appeal. As one interviewee pointed out, "Many social issue films can be used by community groups—the most obvious ways to use media being to show and discuss relevant work—but they don't even know the material exists." Even with organizations that have used media in a more sophisticated way, "The problem is selling the concept. Greenpeace would rather hire someone to make a show than buy into a lab. How to convince them the effort will pay off?"

### ***Tuning into a Changing Public***

I see signs of significant public acceptance of alternative media—look at *The 90's*, at Deep Dish's coverage of the Gulf crisis. There was as much reaction to the media part of the Gulf war as to the war itself. People are very media-aware—how to translate that into new roles for media arts centers? New kinds of networks are coming into being, and media arts centers will be key players in that process. There's been a real democratizing of video in the last five or six years: there are a few million camcorders out there now. How do media arts centers fit in? As editing centers for public use? As downlink centers? When they figure it out, it will bring new money, new ideas, and new blood into the field.

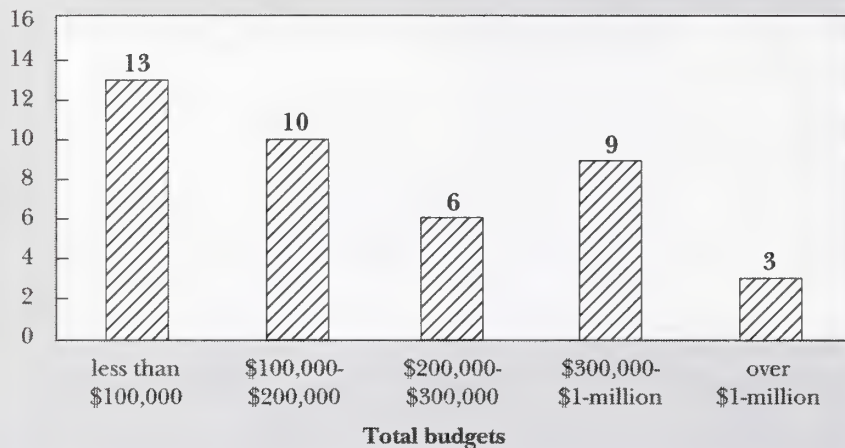
This speaker articulated the exciting (but still vague) promise that some media arts organization leaders see in new technological developments. The "communications revolution" has brought about changes that would have seemed like material for science fiction only a few decades ago: individuals thousands of miles apart linked by phones and computers, creating instant home movies with their video equipment, going on an electronic scavenger hunt through sound and image recordings to create forms of music and visual art never before possible. Some of the predictions knowledgeable people now offer for satellite networking, fiber optics, and interactive media threaten to make the media explosion of the last 10 years look like a gentle

## Media Arts Organizations by Budget Size

Median budget: \$195,000

Average budget: \$390,000

Number of respondents



Source: *The Bottom Line*

disturbance. And of course an increasing proportion of the public is being encouraged by the availability of technology to leap up from their seats in front of the TV or stereo and enter the realm of production.

Some study participants thought it might be possible to exploit this expanded public interest on behalf of the field, by making a case "to manufacturers that media arts centers are precisely the place to put technologies in development, since individual artists' feedback could be important input for evolving design. Manufacturers could be approached on behalf of the field to donate new, demo, or discontinued equipment through a centralized source to media arts centers."

The feeling of being on the cusp of an unparalleled opportunity is pervasive but not easy to concretize. The expectation is that as more and more encompassing networks of communication enable multidirectional transmission of sounds and images, locally-based organizations will have vastly expanded roles to play: as equipment access centers, service and technical assistance centers, and production centers to fill the new need for diverse programming.

If these predictions come true, there will be new income sources in user fees, production grants and contracts, and licensing fees for transmission of material. For the moment, however, this is another area of media arts organization potential that would benefit greatly from the financing of "laboratories" to experiment with new ways of attracting and serving the "media aware," camcorder-toting public.

### Public Sector Support

The leaders of media arts organizations seem hopeful of articulating democratic cultural policy goals to underpin new, broad, public support for media arts work. Rather than calling primarily for public funders to continue playing their main role since the early eighties of filling the "income gap" between established groups' existing funding sources and their aspirations, they are emphasizing the public interest in developing media arts and the democratization of media.

Their responses to this study seem to signal a new turning outward into the public arena, put succinctly by one participant:

It seems that a field is beginning to emerge from where a fringe artistic movement once flourished. Our profile is low because we have lived too long in the margins. We have allowed ourselves to be perceived as a community who cares more about chroma and digital processors and artistic angst than we care about free speech, educating

kids, or fighting injustice. The best way to improve support for the field is to raise our profile, and the best way to raise our profile is to use our facilities and our talents to make life in our communities better. Good deeds attract money.

### Development Priorities

Funders inspired to invest in the development of the media arts organizations field and looking for ways to maximize their impact are encouraged to consider the following priority needs:

- ❖ A diversification and multiplication of funding decision-makers. The smaller, emerging, avant-garde, community-based, and otherwise overlooked members of the field will probably continue to be underrepresented in general, national, and centralized grants programs. It is vital that such institutions receive support from those closer to home, who understand their context and impact.

- ❖ *More visionary funders willing to take the risk of financing research and development.* It is crucial that some funding agencies focus on new initiatives in the field, such as the "laboratories" described above, to develop experimentation in uses of media, to explore and publicize social issues, or to foster experimental programming which can bring media arts organizations into productive contact with the "camcorder revolution."

- ❖ *Support for media arts organizations as lasting institutions.* Media arts organizations must be added to the lists of cultural institutions that philanthropies support on an ongoing basis, not only for new projects and creative explorations.

- ❖ *Support for capital expenditure, recognizing the capital-intensive nature of media arts work.* Most media arts organizations need to acquire, house, maintain, and upgrade expensive equipment in order to do their work effectively, yet few funders have supported this. New sources are needed, whether they evolve from relationships with media equipment manufacturers and suppliers, or from new philanthropic choices.

- ❖ *Support for development in the field.* Everyone participating in this study agreed that new blood is needed to keep the field vital, yet finding support for emerging organizations was recognized as an extremely difficult task. At the same time, only one organization serving primarily people of color appeared above the media income line in the study sample. To realize media arts organizations' goal of democratizing and increasing participation in the media in all communities, this has to change.

- ❖ *Developing public policy for media arts.* Independent media, accessible to everyone in our society, are fundamental to a vibrant, democratic life; yet existing public policy scarcely incorporates even an awareness of the crucial role such media play. Policy agendas reflecting the importance and potential role of media arts need to be developed and promoted in many sectors of public life—the arts, education, broadcasting, recreation, health, and social welfare.

*Don Adams and Arlene Goldbard are partners in Adams & Goldbard, organizational and cultural development consultants based in Ukiah, California. They work with media clients across the US and in their spare time write and speak on issues of cultural policy.*



# FIVF DONOR-ADVISED FILM AND VIDEO FUND

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## CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The Donor-Advised Film and Video Fund works with foundations and individual donors who wish to support independently-produced social issue media. A peer review panel screens works and recommends finalists to donors for funding consideration. In 1991, FIVF is seeking proposals for works in the following areas:

### THE ENVIRONMENT

The Beldon Fund will be making grant awards totalling approximately \$20,000 for production, editing, completion or distribution of films and videotapes on environmental issues. Preference will be given to projects dealing with environmental issues in the United States; projects with an international emphasis will not be considered. Grants will be made up to \$10,000.

### SOCIAL CHANGE

The Edelman Family Fund will make grants totalling at least \$20,000 for projects that explore or encourage social change. The Fund will consider applications for all stages of production; applications for feature films and narratives are welcomed. Past grants have favored subjects and styles that traditional funding sources found too challenging. Average grants will be in the \$5,000 range.

### GENERAL CRITERIA

The Donor-Advised Film and Video Fund is interested in projects that combine intellectual clarity and journalistic quality with creative film- and videomaking. Priority will be given to works on issues that have received minimal coverage and have potential for significant distribution.

Applicants with a single project may apply in only one category. Producers may apply in either category with additional, distinct projects.

For application materials, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to:  
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625 Broadway, 9th floor, New York, NY 10012.

Applicants must be affiliated with a tax-exempt, non-profit organization. Institutional projects for internal use, public television station productions, and student productions are not eligible.

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**Deadline for receipt of applications is September 16, 1991.**

Grant decisions will be made after December 1, 1991.

## WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE

### Indu Krishnan on *Knowing Her Place*

MICHELLE YASMINE VALLADARES

"Growing up in two cultures or coming from one to live in another is like moving in two directions at once or being in two places at once," says Indu Krishnan in the narration of her recent video documentary *Knowing Her Place: An Intimate Portrait of an Indian Woman in America*. "For those who haven't experienced it, it seems a



Indian and Western identities collide for Vasu, the subject of Indu Krishnan's documentary *Knowing Her Place*.

Photo: Schutzer/Gabriner, courtesy videomaker

simple matter of picking and choosing the best of both worlds. But for some of us, it's more painful than that."

Shot in India and the United States, *Knowing Her Place* explores cross-cultural conflict. Its primary subject is Vasu, a 40-year-old, second generation Indian American woman who is shown struggling with the expectations of two different cultural traditions. This conflict eventually leads to Vasu's emotional breakdown and attempted suicide. Her efforts to recover a sense of self by remembering her past and reconciling this with her present illuminate the difficulties of immigration and creating a bicultural identity. Because Krishnan's own experiences parallel those of her subject, she is able to bring to the narration an empathetic observer's insights. The dramatic appeal of *Knowing Her Place* lies in the subtle dance between videomaker and subject around the issues of loyalty, betrayal, and identity.

Krishnan knows the immigrant experience firsthand. Born in Bangalore, India, she studied psychology at Delhi University. In 1982, at age 22, she moved to New York City, where she studied fine arts at Parsons School of Design. She eventually earned a master's degree in media studies from the New School for Social Research. She has since produced cultural programs for both Indian and US television and educational films for the United Nations. She most recently coproduced *News World Order* and *Global Descent* for the Gulf Crisis TV Project.

*Knowing Her Place* (1990) is Krishnan's most personal work and her first independently produced documentary. It combines intimate interviews, stylistic devices like slow motion to emphasize climatic moments leading to Vasu's breakdown, a haunting musical score, and the videomaker's narration to create a compelling, poetic portrait of Vasu's experience. Since premiering at the Asian American International Video Festival last year, the tape has been widely seen and favorably received on the festival circuit, including the Margaret Mead Festival, the Flaherty Documentary Seminar in Riga, Latvia, and international festivals in Hawaii and Birmingham. It has also been screened at the Museum of Modern Art and Boston Museum of Fine Arts and will have its television premiere on October 20 on WNET's *Independent Focus*.

The idea for *Knowing Her Place* began with Krishnan's desire to examine the shifts in social values and attitudes across generations in immigrant families. But once she met Vasu, Krishnan recalls, "All the academic variables fell apart. We developed a close relationship, because in many ways I was one of the few people she could come to." The shared cultural background, trust, and friendship gave the videomaker access to Vasu and her family over a three-year period.

Born in the United States to a traditional Indian family, Vasu travelled as a child back and forth between the US and India. Her father, who defied convention and nurtured Vasu's dreams of an education and a career, died when she was 16. Under societal and family pressures, Vasu's mother arranged a marriage against her will. She subsequently returned to the US with her husband, Raghu, a mathematician. *Knowing Her Place* picks up Vasu's story at mid-life as she strives to find a balance between her Indian and Western identities. In candid interviews, Vasu painfully recalls the conflicts she faced growing up: class-





mates taunting her about the color of her skin; secretly dancing to Danny and the Juniors, because rock music was forbidden in her home; being protectively shipped off to the family home in Madras when she reached puberty.

Krishnan rejects the melting pot metaphor for immigrant life in the US. "Right now I throw the concept of assimilation out the window. It's like wearing bifocals. Although you can change your focal point, you can never put the two together. You might reach a point where you can look at a scene in two completely different ways. Learning to live with this schizophrenia—this is what it means to be a well-adjusted bicultural person."

This concept of cultural schizophrenia is central to *Knowing Her Place*. Vasu is aware of the possibilities that exist for her as an independent woman in the US, and she shares a Western desire for achievement outside the family. But to act on her wishes is like a betrayal, a denial of her responsibilities as a good Indian wife and mother. Vasu's family fails to understand the pressures caused by the demands of Indian tradition in a Western environment. Her husband intellectualizes Vasu's troubles, saying, "Conflict is often perceived to be more serious than it really is. The mind exaggerates it." Her two sons, Ashok and Gopal, also dismiss their mother's complaints, arguing that Vasu must merely make up her mind about which culture she belongs to.

Krishnan believes this cultural schizophrenia caused physical changes in Vasu. "When we shot Vasu in India, she would speak and sound differently, sometimes even walk differently. Often we were asked if it was the same person throughout the interviews." The director recalls, "Vasu says at one point, 'I say that I'm very Indian, and I feel

#### Vasu with her mother in Madras, India.

Photo: Thomas Matthews, courtesy videomaker

very Indian, but sometimes I wonder if I go back to India and live there, will I be accepted?" It's a familiar question for Krishnan, who admits, "One thing I found confusing is that I became more Indian after I came to this country."

Prior to her suicide attempt, Vasu struggles to articulate her anger. In a climatic scene shot during a Thanksgiving dinner, we witness the strained family dynamics as the sons humiliate their mother and her attempts to cook a nice dinner. Finally, in the kitchen alone, Vasu explodes in bitterness and frustration. After a failed suicide, Vasu enters therapy. It is a courageous decision for someone belonging to a closed community where problems are traditionally worked out within the family. Krishnan doubts "whether Westerners understand what it really means for Vasu to admit needing to go to an outsider."

The close relationship Krishnan developed with Vasu's family intensified the videomaker's feelings of betraying her subject's "family secrets." "One of the reasons the video took so long to finish," Krishnan admits, "is that I couldn't deal with putting all this stuff out there." She openly confronts this fear in her narration: "Trying to understand Vasu's experiences, I'd reveal her pain. I wondered, then, if it was my right as a filmmaker to make that pain public."

"In a documentary," explains Krishnan, "one tries to make the subject accessible. I wanted to do this, but not compromise my vision. I thought it would be easy to show this special schizophrenia. But the more I worked with the subject, the more

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I realized there were many intangibles that would have to be dealt with using less of a straight documentary, cinema vérité approach. The questions I wanted to ask and confront the audience with weren't in the material." Consequently Krishnan chose to narrate the video using the voice of shared experience. "I realized that I'd have to include myself in the film. That was a very difficult decision—because you know the way we Indians are. We're so self-effacing. It's fine to get behind the camera, but to get in front of it is difficult." In the end, it is the voice of the videomaker that provides the essential cultural bridge in *Knowing Her Place* and offers the sensitivity of an understanding observer.

Krishnan admits that "*Knowing Her Place* is intended for a Western audience. I have the perspective of an Asian woman, and [editor] Scott Sinkler provided the counterpoint." Even so, "You'll notice there's not a straight chronology, because I feel that the past, present, and future are in every moment, which is a Hindu concept," the videomaker points out. "So, I didn't feel the need to maintain a straight order at all, because it's really about shifting time, shifting space—all the things you can't do in a linear documentary."

Krishnan believes that making this tape has affected her own life and self-perception. "There are times when I feel my emotional ties are more important to me than my professional ties, maybe because of my conditioning. When I looked at Vasu's life, there was a shock of recognition—this could be me."

*Michelle Yasmine Valladares, born in Bombay, is currently working on an experimental documentary with Victor Masayeva, Jr., a Hopi director/producer.*

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AIVF has a network of regional correspondents who can provide membership information, hold meetings, and aid recruitment in areas of the country outside New York City. AIVF members are urged to contact them about AIVF-related needs and problems, your activities, and other relevant information and news:

**Howard Aaron**, Northwest Film and Video Ctr., 1219 S.W. Park Ave., Portland, OR 97205; (503) 221-1156

**Cheryl Chisolm**, 2844 Engle Road, NW, Atlanta, GA 30318; (404) 792-2167

**Dee Davis**, Appalshop, 306 Whitesburg, KY 41858; (606) 633-0108

**Loni Ding**, 2335 Jones St., San Francisco, CA 94133; (415) 474-5132; 673-6428

**Dai Sil Kim-Gibson**, 1752 17th St., NW, Washington, DC 20009; (202) 232-6912

**Deanna Morse**, School of Communication, Grand Valley State Univ., Allendale, MI 49401; (616) 895-3101



RENEE TAJIMA

One day in 1985, on the steps of the Pentagon, a group of Trinidadian carnival artists performed their "Adoration for Madame Hiroshima" for the generals inside, the peace activists outside, and the US public. The artists had been invited to participate in Hiroshima/Nagasaki Day activities and lead a Procession of Peace through the city. **Madame Hiroshima**, a new documentary by New York-based videomakers Diane Agosta, Eddie Becker, and Karen Glynn, shows how the artists built their fantastic costumes and explores both the origins of their work in Trinidadian folklore and the reasons why they became involved in this action for global survival. The artists were led by Peter Minshall, whose *mas* (performances at carnival) combine folklore, Christian symbolism, and the personification of the atom bomb in a character called Madame Hiroshima. Minshall adapted parts of this *mas* trilogy for the demonstration and procession, all of which was documented by the producers. *Madame Hiroshima*: Diane Agosta, 180 Claremont Ave., #32, New York, NY 10027; (212) 663-3887.

New York writer/producer/director Mara Alper has completed **Silent Echoes**, an experimental narrative about a woman who maintains her sense of dignity and inner strength despite the odds. It is a dream piece without dialogue featuring dancer-choreographer Pat Hall-Smith as a powerful, spiritual dancer. In the eight-and-a-half minute tape, Alper uses rapid cuts and multilayered dissolves to create a staccato pace. Haitian and Nigerian sacred dance are integrated with experimental video to express the underlying theme of fostering respect for other cultures and traditions that celebrate the earth and spirit. *Silent Echoes*: Mara Alper, 36 Russell Ave., Beacon, NY 12508; (914) 831-1628.

Australian member producer Megan McMurphy and director Susan Dermody are due to complete production on **Breathing under Water**, their feature film debut. Accompanied by her young daughter and guided by a mysterious character named Herman and a makeshift map borrowed from Dante, a woman travels into an imaginary underworld city. Her journey is an investigation into human nature, a confrontation with the fears of our time, and a search for clues



Trinidadian carnival artists perform in *Madame Hiroshima*, by Diane Agosta, Eddie Becker, and Karen Glynn.

Courtesy videomakers

that will ultimately answer the central riddle of the film: "Why on earth has humankind set the stage for its own extinction?" Actress Anne Louise Lambert, known for her roles in *The Draughtsman's Contract* and *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, plays the leading role of Beatrice; Dermody cast her own daughter Maeve as the child. *Breathing under Water*: Periscope Productions, Box 11, Bondi Beach, NSW 2026, Australia; tel: 61-2-925-7310.

Having earned a Worldfest Finalist Award for

### ATTENTION AIVF MEMBERS

The **In and Out of Production** column is a regular feature in *The Independent*, designed to give AIVF members an opportunity to keep the organization and others interested in independent media informed about current work. We profile works-in-progress as well as recent releases. These are not critical reviews, but informational descriptions. AIVF members are invited to submit detailed information about their latest film or videotape for inclusion in **In and Out of Production**. Send descriptions and black and white photographs to: *The Independent*, 625 Broadway, 9th floor, New York, NY 10012; attn: In and Out of Production.

original comedy screenplay, Webster Lewin and Ronald Peshtimaldjan hope to see **Savage Siblings** go into production. *Savage Siblings* is a farce set in the world of Texas' wealthy elite, where the eccentric and extravagant are commonplace. Dedicated young environmentalist-heiress Jarvetta Neuhouse is pitted against her snobbish, megalomaniac older brother Jarvis when their elderly parents find Jarvetta in the jungles of Brazil. They convince her to help them regain control of the family's multibillion dollar aerospace company, which was forcibly taken over by Jarvis, who had his parents abducted and imprisoned in a bogus nursing home. Jarvetta stops her brother's plot to control the world's energy supply with a new space-age energy source found only on the planet Mars. *Savage Siblings*: Webster Lewin; (213) 871-8181, 289-0982.

Mehendi, the traditional Pakistani art of decorating women's hands and feet with henna to celebrate weddings and other festive occasions, is the subject of a new videotape by Susan Slyomovics and Amanda Dargan. **Wedding Song** profiles Shenaz Hooda, who lives in Queens and whose family belongs to the Shia Ismaili sect of Islam. Her skill at mehendi makes Hooda an established figure at wedding parties for the growing Indian and Pakistani community. In the documentary Hooda explains the tradition of mehendi. For example, she paints letters forming the groom's name among the patterns of flowers, leaves, lines, and circles on the bride's palms. On the wedding night it is customary for the groom to search for his name hidden among the designs. If he finds it,

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he is said to dominate the bride. If he cannot, the bride rules the groom. *Wedding Song*: Susan Slyomovics, Tisch School of the Arts, Dept. of Performance Studies, New York University, 721 Broadway, 6th fl., New York, NY 10003; (212) 998-1620.

As video camcorders become more widely distributed in Asia, videomakers have become active protagonists in the social and political changes that are taking place in the region. ...**Will Be Televised: Video Documents from Asia** is a new series coordinated and produced by Shu Lea Cheang that archives this movement. The collection of one-hour programs from five regions in Asia is meant to challenge the one-way flow of US media and validate Asian struggles for press freedom and democracy. Programs include: *Korea: Until Daybreak*, curated by Hye Jung Park and produced in Korea by the Han-Kyoreh Video Collective; *The Philippines: A Legacy of Violence*, curated by Nick DeoCampo; *Taiwan: The Generation after Martial Law*, curated by Ching Jan Lee; *Hong Kong: Only Something That Is about to Disappear Becomes an Image*, curated by Danny Yung; and *China: Presenting "River Elegy"*, curated by Mi Ling Tsui. ...**Will Be Televised: Video Documents from Asia**: Shu Lea Cheang, Videoasia, 225 Lafayette St., Suite 812, New York, NY 10012; (212) 777-6912.

*Phantom Cities*, a new three-channel video installation by Rita Myers, began a two-year national tour last fall at the University of Massachu-

setts at Amherst. The installation mixes video images with architectural and natural forms arranged in a manner similar to an abandoned archaeological site. The focal point is an octagonally-shaped area containing a miniature replica of a city partially buried in black sand. Combining elements of Mayan and New York City architecture, the city is surrounded by suspended trees and charred wall fragments and contains eight video monitors presenting visual comparisons between ancient and contemporary cultures and fragmentary images of fictionalized cities. *Phantom Cities*: University Gallery, Univ. of MA at Amherst, Amherst, MA 01003; (413) 545-3670.

## FIVE TAPE LIBRARY

The FIVE Festival Bureau has established a tape library of members' current works to expedite screenings for upcoming film and video festivals. Members interested in depositing work in the library should contact: Kathryn Bowser, Festival Bureau director, FIVE, 625 Broadway, 9th fl., New York, NY 10012, (212) 473-3400. 1/2" and 3/4" tapes will be accepted.



## Domestic

**AFRICAN AMERICAN NEW WORKS Film Festival**, Sept. 27-28, VA. 1st annual fest of features & shorts about African American experience. No fee; incl. return shipping for preview. Format: 16mm. Deadline: Aug. 31. Contact: Jerome Legions, African American New Works Film Festival, Omega Media Network, Box 4824, Richmond, VA 23220; (804) 353-4525.

**AMERICAN INDIAN FILM FESTIVAL** Nov. 7-9; Video Exposition, Nov. 17-18, CA. Now in 16th yr, oldest int'l competitive fest of films & videos by or about Native Americans accepts work produced since 1990. Cats: doc feature, doc short, commercial feature, docudrama, live short subject, animated short subject, industrial. American Indian Motion Picture Awards presented. Entry fee: \$50. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Sept. 5. Contact: Michael Smith, director, American Indian Film Festival & Video Exposition, 333 Valencia St., Suite 322, San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 554-0525.

**ASBURY FILM FESTIVAL**, Oct. 25-27, NY. Celebrating 10th anniv., nat'l noncompetitive showcase for independent short films (under 25 min.) held at Fashion Institute of Technology combines screenings w/ live entertainment. Last yr over 800 people attended. This yr features best films from past editions. Cats: animated, experimental, comedy, doc, dramatic. Entry fee: \$30. Format: 16mm. Deadline: Sept. 25. Contact: Asbury Festival of Short Films, 147 W. 25th St., New York, NY 10001; (212) 366-1337; fax: (212) 683-1169.

**BUCKS COUNTY INDEPENDENT SHORT FILM COMPETITION**, Oct., PA. 8th nat'l competition & tour of ind. works under 20 min. completed after Jan. 1, 1989. \$5,000 prize & rental fees to range of entries; no cats, selection balances experimental, doc, animated, narrative. Winning films tour 10 sites, primarily in PA; last yr's tour incl. St. Louis, Houston, IA, CA, Honolulu, Vancouver. Sponsored by Film Five, nonprofit filmmakers cooperative. Entry fee: \$25. Format: 16mm. Deadline: Sept 25. Contact: John Toner, Bucks County Film Tour, c/o Smith & Toner, 91 E. Court St., Doylestown, PA 18901; (215) 345-5663 (eve); fax: (215) 348-3569.

**DALLAS VIDEO FESTIVAL**, Nov. 14-17, TX. Dallas Museum of Art showcases 5th annual fest of new works by ind. artists. General fest programming, rental fee paid; Texas Show, chosen by jury, TX residents or work produced in TX; Amiga Show, works produced using Amiga computer; Game Preserve, computer games. Compilation show produced. Also features workshops for children & educators, screenings by TV pioneers, technology demos. Entries must be produced or postproduced on video or shot on film & transferred to video. Entry fee: \$10. Formats: 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Aug. 30. Contact: Dallas Video Festival, 215A Henry St., Dallas, TX 75226; (214) 651-8888.

**PITTSBURGH INTERNATIONAL LESBIAN & GAY FILM FESTIVAL**, Oct., PA. Accepts film & video w/ lesbian & gay themes. Entry fee: \$15 plus return postage. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Deadline: Sept. 10. Contact: Daniel Schott, PILGFF, Box 90007, Pittsburgh, PA 15224; (412) 362-8850.

**PRIZED PIECES VIDEO & FILM COMPETITION**, Dec., OH. 11th annual competition of TV & film productions affirming universality of Black experience & depicting Black people & culture throughout world in non-stereotypical ways. Cats: drama, youth/teens, public

**This month's festivals have been compiled by Kathryn Bowser, director of the FIVE Festival Bureau. Listings do not constitute an endorsement. Since some details change faster than we do, we recommend that you contact the festival for further information before sending prints or tapes. In order to improve our reliability and make this column more beneficial to independents, we encourage all film- and videomakers to contact FIVE Festival Bureau with their personal festival experiences, positive and negative.**

affairs, doc, Black music video, promotional short, content category short, Black independent producer, best student film/videomaker. Oscar Micheaux Award honors Black media professionals. Entries should conform to broadcast standards & be aired, exhibited, or produced for broadcast between Sept. 1, 1990 & Aug. 31, 1991. Entry fees: \$35 ind. producers; \$60 all others. Enclose return postage. Formats: 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Sept. 2. Contact: Jackie Tshaka, National Black Programming Consortium, 929 Harrison Ave., Suite 104, Columbus, OH 43215; (614) 299-5355; fax: (614) 299-4761.

**WOMEN IN THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR** International Film & Video Festival, March, IL. Now in 11th yr, int'l fest highlights work by women film- & videomakers completed in past 4 yrs. Coincides w/ Int'l Women's Day. Fest reflects range of styles & points of view, cutting across boundaries of language, culture & politics w/ women's perspectives. Entry fees: \$20 nonmembers, \$15 members, \$35 foreign. Formats: 16mm, 3/4", 1/2"; preview on cassette. Deadline: Oct. 1. Contact: Jeanne Kracher, WIDC, 3435 Sheffield Ave., Chicago, IL 60657; (312) 281-4988.

## Foreign

**AMIENS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, Nov., France. Competitive showcase for productions on culture, representation & identity, racism, differences & ethnic matters. Audiences over 30,000 view about 20 films in competition & special programs on int'l identities; e.g. African American, Native American, Maori, Asian. Fest now in 11th yr. Awards: grand prize, special jury prize, acting awards. Concurrent market screens over 150 ind. & 3rd world films. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: Sept. 15. Contact: Jean-Pierre Garcia, Amiens International Film Festival, 36, rue de Noyon, 8000 Amiens, France; tel: 22 91 01 44; fax: 22 92 51 82.

**AMSTERDAM INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL**, Dec. 4-11, Holland. Now in 4th yr, competitive fest programs about 40 docs in competition & nearly 100 in retros & series. Winner receives Joris

Ivens Award. This yr programs incl. retros on European Identities & Israel/Palestine, Top 10 (famous filmmaker's favorite docs), seminars, workshops & talk shows. About 25,000 visit fest, held in center of Amsterdam. Work must be completed in previous yr. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: Oct 1. Contact: Ally Derks/Adriek van Nieuwenhuyzen, International Documentary Filmfestival Amsterdam, Kleine Gartmanplantsoen 10, Amsterdam, Holland 1017 RR, Holland; tel: 020 6273229; fax: 020 6385388.

**BILBAO INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF DOCUMENTARY & SHORT FILM**, Nov. Spain. Under theme Images for Understanding between Peoples, FIAPF-recognized fest, now in 33rd yr, accepts films up to 30 min. for competition. Works must be completed after Sept 1, 1990 & not awarded in European competitive fests. Awards: Grand Award (400,000 Ptas), Grand Award of Spanish/Basque Filmmaking (350,000 Ptas); Gold & Silver Mikeldi Awards for Animation. Doc & Fiction (250,000 Ptas./150,000 Ptas). Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: Sept. 15. Contact: International Documentary & Short Film Festival of Bilbao, Colon de Larreategui, 37-4, Dcha. Bilbao 48009, Spain; tel: 4245507.

**CAIRO FILM FESTIVAL**, Dec. 2-15, Egypt. Celebrating 15th anniv., competitive FIAPF-recognized fest selects works produced in 1990-91 for competition, info section, actors-directors, awarded films sections, tributes & market (for features & TV prod. shot on film & tape). Hospitality for invited filmmakers. Fest pays return shipping for selected films. Format: 35mm. Deadline: Sept. 15. Contact: Cairo International Film Festival, 17 Kasr El Nil St., Cairo, Egypt; tel: 3933832/3923562/3923962; fax: 3938979; telex: 21781 CFF UN.

**FESTIVAL DEI POPOLI** International Review of Social Documentary Film, Nov. 29-Dec. 7, Italy. Now in 32nd yr, major int'l showcase for social docs will present competition, info section (incl. film & art, film & history, cinema on cinema, new trends, ethno-anthropology, current events), retros & special events. Entries must be completed after Sept. 1, 1990 & deal w/ social, political, anthropological issues. Awards: best doc (L20,000,000); best research (L10,000,000); best ethnographic doc (Gian Paolo Paoli award); best doc/student jury (silver award). Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Deadline: Sept. 15. Contact: Festival dei Popoli, Via dei Castellani 8, 50122 Florence, Italy; tel: 055 294353; fax: 055 213698; telex: 575615 FESTIP.

**FLORENCE FILM FESTIVAL**, Dec., Italy. Annual non-competitive panorama of current cinema began as showcase for US ind. productions & focuses on ind. fiction features. Fest, now in 12th yr, screens 15-20 films (out of about 200 entries) for enthusiastic audiences. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: Oct. 15. Contact: Fabrizio Fiumi, Florence Film Festival, Via S. Zanobi 54r, 50129 Florence, Italy; tel: 55 281154; fax: 55 298249.

**HOF FILM FESTIVAL**, Oct. 23-27, Germany. New filmmakers showcased in one of Germany's major film events, celebrating 25th yr. Founded by New German filmmakers Werner Herzog, Wim Wenders, Alexander Kluge & Rainer Werner Fassbinder, fest showed about 80 films last yr incl. 12 US ind. films. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: Aug. 30. Contact: Heinz Badewitz, Internationale Hofer Filmtage, Lothstrasse 28, D-8000 Munich 2, Germany; tel: 89 1297422; fax: 89 1236868.

**LEIPZIG INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF DOCUMENTARY & ANIMATION FILMS**, Nov. 15-21,



Germany. Now in 34th yr under new theme Films of the World—For Human Dignity, all-doc fest incl. competition for Golden & Silver Doves (w/ cash prizes totalling \$30,000), info program, video workshop, retro & film market. Competition accepts docs of all genres produced for cinema or TV, films of mixed form based on doc material & animation. Video workshop accepts productions originating on video by inds or TV stations. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: Sept. 15. Contact: Christiane Mockenberger, director, Leipzig International Festival of Documentary & Animation Films, Chodowieckstrasse 32, 1055 Berlin, Germany; tel: 295034; telex: 512455 dok dd.

**MADRID INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF FILMS BY WOMEN**, Nov. 8-17, Spain. 7th edition of fest held at Nat'l Film Institute. Sections this yr: Ultima Hora (premieres produced 1989-91); films directed by Black women; homage to Spanish directors 1935-present; Liliana Cavani retro; selection of Spanish, French & Canadian videos. Entries should be directed by women. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Contact: Debra Perez, director, Festival Internacional de Cine Realizado por Mujeres, c/o Ateneo Feminista de Espana, Barquillo, 44, 2 izq., 28004 Madrid, Spain; tel: 91 308 69 35; fax: 91 319 69 02.

**NATURE, MAN, AND HIS ENVIRONMENT FILM FESTIVAL**, Nov. 4-9, Italy. Recent narrative, animated or doc. productions of any length accepted for non-competitive fest, now in 21st yr, held in Viterbo. Entries should concern: basic ecological information; increasing awareness of natural resource preservation; chemical, physical & noise pollution; preservation of flora, fauna,

natural landscape; national parks & reserves; man-made landscapes; defense of historic character of towns & ancient buildings, works of art & cultural heritage; public health & environmental hygiene; environmental education. 3 Gold Awards to orgs or individuals contributing to safeguarding environment. No entry fee. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: Sept. 30. Contact: Liborio Rao, Ente Mostra Cinematografica Internazionale "La Natura, L'Uomo e il suo Ambiente," Via de Villa Patrizi, 10, 00161 Rome, Italy; tel: 06 8847 3218.

**TOULON FESTIVAL OF MARITIME AND EXPLORATION FILMS**, Nov. 12-17, France. Held since 1959, fest accepts films dealing w/ exploration (oceanology, archaeology, naval history, underwater exploration, ethnography). Cats: scientific, exploration, fiction, sports, advertising. Awards: Gold Anchor, Silver Anchor, Bronze Anchor (w/ prizes). Other awards: French Navy Award, Rolex Grand Prize for subaquatic wildlife protection, Angenieux Award for best photography, Press Prize, Audience Prize & others. No entry fee. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Sept. 15. Contact: Festival International du Film Maritime et d'Exploration, 14, rue Peiress, 83000 Toulon, France; tel: 94 92 99 22; fax: 94 91 35 65.

**VALLADOLID FILM FESTIVAL**, Oct. 18-26, Spain. 36th edition of fest accepts films that contribute to knowledge & dialogue between human beings. Sections: Official (panorama, features & shorts in & out of competition); Meeting Point (noncompetitive section from past & present); Time of History (docs dealing w/ history from cinematic viewpoint). Also: sidebars

dedicated to Carl Reiner & Jan Svankmajer & tributes to Latin American cinema & NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. Entries must be recent productions w/ no commercial, TV/video, or fest screening in Spain. Awards: Golden Spike & Silver Spike to features & shorts, plus 2-million Ptas to Spanish distrib of feature winning Golden Spike; best first film; best actress/actor; best director of photography; Jury Prize to short & features, 2 special mentions. Best Documentary in Time of History awarded \$3,000. Format: 35mm, 16mm & in exceptional cases 3/4" or 1/2" accepted in Time of History section only. Deadline: Sept. 1. Contact: Semana Internacional de Cine de Valladolid, C/Angustias, 1, 1 planta, Apartado de Correos 646, 47003 Valladolid, Spain; tel: 34 83 305700/77/88; fax: 34 83 309835; telex: 26304 FONCAB E.

**VIDEO DANSE GRAND PRIX INTERNATIONAL**, Dec. 6-10, France. All styles of dance on film or video eligible for competition, judged by 9-member jury of dance & video specialists & 5-member panel of int'l dance & TV journalists. Awards: Grand Prix International Video Danse (choreographic work of highest quality) FF100,000; Press Prize (PROCIREP) FF30,000; Int'l Tribune of Composers for Dance FF30,000; Special Awards (history of dance, choreographic creation, TV production, video dance reporting, special jury). Preliminary judging in Prague Sept. 19-22. Fest held in Sete, France. Entries must be completed after Sept. 1, 1989. Entry fee: FF400. Formats: 3/4", 1/2" PAL. Deadline: Sept. 8. Contact: Grand Prix International Video Danse, General Secretariat, 45, rue Lamarck, F-75018 Paris, France; tel: 33 1 42 23 40 27; fax: 33 1 42 23 60 21.



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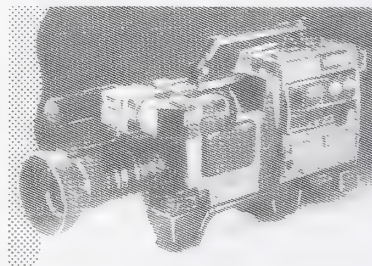
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# The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers

**W**hen you join the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, you're doing something for yourself—and for others. Membership entitles you to a wide range of benefits. Plus, it connects you with a national network of independent producers. Adding your voice helps us all. The stronger AIVF is, the more we can act as advocate for the interests of independents like yourself—inside the corridors of Washington, with the press, and with others who affect our livelihoods.

## 7 Benefits of Membership

### THE INDEPENDENT

Membership provides you with a year's subscription to *The Independent*. Published 10 times a year, the magazine is a vital source of information about the independent media field. Each issue helps you get down to business with festival listings, funding deadlines, exhibition venues, and more. Plus, you'll find thought-provoking features, coverage of the field's news, and regular columns on business, technical, and legal matters.

### THE FESTIVAL BUREAU

AIVF maintains up-to-date information on over 650 national and international festivals, and can help you determine which are right for your film or video.

### Liaison Service

AIVF works directly with many foreign festivals, in some cases collecting and shipping tapes or prints overseas, in other cases serving as the U.S. host to visiting festival directors who come to review work.

### Tape Library

Members can house copies of their work in the AIVF tape library for screening by visiting festival programmers. Or make your own special screening arrangements with AIVF.

### INFORMATION SERVICES

#### Distribution

By person or over the phone, AIVF can provide information about distributors and the kinds of films, tapes, and markets in which they specialize.

### AIVF's Member Library

Our library houses information on distributors, funders, and exhibitors, as well as sample contracts, funding applications, budgets, and other matters.

### SEMINARS

Our seminars explore current business, aesthetic, legal, and technical topics, giving independent producers a valuable forum to discuss relevant issues.

### BOOKS AND TAPES

AIVF has the largest mail order catalog of media books and audiotaped seminars in the U.S. Our list covers all aspects of film and video production. And we're constantly updating our titles, so independents everywhere have access to the latest media information. We also publish a growing list of our own titles, covering festivals, distribution, and foreign and domestic production resource guides.

*continued*

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### *Production Insurance*

A production insurance plan, tailor-made for AIVF members and covering public liability, faulty film and tape, equipment, sets, scenery, props, and extra expense, is available, as well as an errors and omissions policy with unbeatable rates.

### *Group Health, Disability, and Life Insurance Plans with TEIGIT*

AIVF currently offers two health insurance policies, so you're able to find the one that best suits your needs.

### *Dental Plan*

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## DEALS AND DISCOUNTS

### *Service Discounts*

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Keep watching *The Independent* for information about additional benefits.

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## Conferences ■ Seminars

**FILM IN THE CITIES** workshops: Adapting for the Screen, Aug. 8-11; Lighting on a Tight Budget, Aug. 9-12. Contact: Lightworks, Film in the Cities, 2388 University Ave., St. Paul, MN 55114.

**FILM/VIDEO ARTS** summer workshops: Directing Ind. Doc, Aug. 3; Video Editing, Spanish, Aug. 14, 15 & 18; Prep. for F/VA On-Line Session, Aug. 1; Prof. Super 8 Film Prod. Aug. 24; Arri Cameras Seminar, Aug. 10; Producer's Pkg. Aug. 5 & 6. Minority scholarships avail. Contact: F/VA, 817 Broadway, New York, NY 10003; (212) 673-9361.

## Films ■ Tapes Wanted

**AXELGREASE** 30-min. public-access program sponsored by Squeaky Wheel showcases video & film by artists in Buffalo & around US. Experimental, animation, narrative, doc, or computer imaging works under 27 min. on 1/2", 3/4", Beta, 8mm, or hi-8. Contact: Axelgrease, Squeaky Wheel/Buffalo Media Resources, 372 Connecticut St., Buffalo, NY 14213; (716) 884-7172.

**COE FILM ASSOCIATES**, distributors of independently produced docs, dramas, & children's programs, seeks new product for foreign & domestic TV markets. Send 1/2" & 3/4" tapes for screening. Contact: Beverly Freeman, CFA, 65 E. 96th St., New York, NY 10128; (212) 831-5355.

**FIFTEEN MINUTES**: Washington, DC nightclub wants video & film for Wednesday night screening & performance events. Fees to artists. Accepts 16mm, VHS, S-VHS & hi-8. Also looking for ambient video. Contact: Eric Gravley, 15 Minutes, 1030 15th St., NW, Washington, DC 20005; (202) 667-5643.

**LA PLAZA**: weekly WGBH-Boston doc series acquires original works by ind. film & videomakers on social & cultural issues concerning Latinos. Send VHS or 3/4" tapes to: La Plaza/Acquisitions, WGBH, 125 Western Ave., Boston, MA 02134.

**LONG SHOT THEATER**: nonprofit public access program seeks film & video under 25 min. in all genres for weekly 30-min. forum. No fees. Send 3/4" cassette & brief description to: Todd Sargent, Long Shot Theater, 48 Sawyer Ave., Boston, MA 02125; (617) 287-1980.

**NEW DAY FILMS**: self-distribution coop for ind. producers seeks new members w/ recent social issue docs for US nontheatrical markets. Deadline: Sept. 1. Contact: Ralph Arlyck, 79 Raymond Ave., Poughkeepsie, NY 12601.

**SENSORY LAB** seeks video art/imagery for alternative showcase in Los Angeles. Contact: Magdalena, Sensory Lab, 4470-107 Sunset Blvd., Box 420, Los Angeles, CA 90027; (213) 661-3903.

## Opportunities ■ Gigs

**BANFF CENTRE FOR THE ARTS** seeks TV & Video program director to exec. prod projects, collaborate w/ artists from various disciplines, develop workshops & direct prod staff. Must be exp'd director/prod w/ knowledge of artists' video. Exp. w/ arts programming preferred. Deadline: Aug. 31. Send resumé & video sample to: Director of personnel services; Banff Centre, Box 1020, Banff, Alberta, Canada, T0L 0C0; (403) 762-6175; fax: (403) 762-6116.

**Notices are listed free of charge. AIVF members receive first priority; others are included as space permits. The Independent reserves the right to edit for length. Deadlines for Notices will be respected. These are the 8th of the month, two months prior to cover date, e.g., August 8 for the October issue. Send to: Independent Notices, FIVF, 625 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.**

**FILM/VIDEO ARTS INTERNSHIPS**. Minimum 6-month commitment, 15 hrs/wk work in exch. for free media classes, access to equip. & facilities. Minorities strongly encouraged. Appls received at all times. Contact: Angie Cohn, intern coordinator, F/VA, 817 Broadway, New York, NY 10003-4797; (212) 673-9361.

**MEDIA ARTIST** sought by Univ. of Michigan for courses in film & video prod. as 3-yr lecturer starting Sept. 1992. Send letter & vitae to: Ira Konigsberg, Program in Film & Video Studies, Univ. of Michigan, 2512 Frieze Bldg., Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1285.

**POV**: Nonfiction public television series showing ind. work seeks director of communications to position/market challenging work to primetime audiences, develop grassroots support & expand visibility of series. Experience w/ ind. media, social issues, press relations. For details write: D. Lewis, POV, 330 W. 58th St. #3A, New York, NY 10019. No calls.

**WALKER ART CENTER**: Asst Dir. of Film/Video Program sought to curate & present film & video exhibition program & assist in audience development, marketing & outreach. Contact: Personnel Manager, Walker Art Center, Vineland Place, Minneapolis, MN 55403.

## Publications

**ANGLES**: Quarterly newsletter on women in film & video beginning publication in Sept. will focus on women at all levels, incl. camera, technicians, screenwriters, directors, producers, exhibitors & programmers. Dedicated to linking women in the media arts around US & increasing public awareness of women's work through educ. Subscription: \$15. Send news items & suggestions to *Angles*, Box 11916, Milwaukee, WI 53211.

**ASIAN CINEMA**: biannual journal of Asian Cinema Studies Society includes articles, reviews & reports on conferences, fests, publications, exhibitions, distrib. sources & research in progress. Avail. w/ membership in ACSS. Fee: \$12 individual; \$20 institutional; \$10 student/PT employed. Contact: Linda Ehrlich, ACSS Treasurer, 501 McClung Tower, Univ. of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN 37996.



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**FELIX:** 1st issue of media arts journal avail. Issue theme: Censoring the Media. Incl. articles on lesbian & gay artists, video activism & Gulf War coverage, reviews & artists' contributions. Subscription 3 issues/yr: \$15 individuals; \$21 institutions. *Felix*, Standby Program, Box 124 Prince St. Station, New York, NY 10012; (212) 219-0951.

**FOUNDATION CENTER:** *National Directory of Corporate Giving* now avail. Price: \$175 plus \$4.50 postage. Contact: Foundation Center, 79 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10003-3050; (800) 424-9836, (212) 620-4230.

**LIGHTS! CAMERA! SAFETY!** by Michael McCann. Film & TV production health & safety manual analyzes hazards & compiles laws, regulations, procedures, services & recommendations for safer working environments. Contact: Center for Safety in the Arts, 5 Beekman St., Suite 1030, New York, NY 10038.

**NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES:** 1990 Annual Report w/ complete listing of Endowment grants for FY 1990. Free. Contact: NEH 1990 Annual Report, Rm. 406, 1100 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20506.

**VIDEO DUPLICATION DIRECTORY:** 1st annual guide profiles duplicators in US & Canada w/ sales volume, types of accounts, formats & other services, intro & industry statistics. Price: \$147 plus \$10/\$30 foreign; CA add \$10.15. Corbell Publishing, 2554 Lincoln Blvd. Suite 1015, Marina Del Rey, CA 90291; (213) 821-6675; fax: (213) 641-9769.

**WHO FUNDS PTV?** *Producer's Guide to Public Television Funding* avail. free from Corporation for Public Broadcasting, 901 E St., NW, Washington, DC 20004-2006; (202) 879-9600.

### **Resources ■ Funds**

**CPB TELEVISION PROGRAM FUND** announces multi-cultural programming solicitation for development & production of 58 min. programs for nat'l public TV broadcast. Proposals may be submitted in 3 areas: children's & educational, news & public affairs & drama. Producer & director must be minorities. Deadline: August 15. For guidelines contact: Multicultural Programming Solicitation, TV Program Fund, CPB, 901 E Street, NW, Washington DC 20004-2006; (202) 879-9600.

**DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY TV** offers technical assistance worth \$500 to 10 NY emerging video artists & ind. producers for fall & winter 1991. Postprod. & prod. facilities provided. Deadline: Aug. 31. Contact: AIR Program, DCTV, 87 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10013; (212) 966-4510.

**FILM/VIDEO ARTS** offers financial assistance for film rentals & speaker fees to nonprofit community orgs in NYS. Priority given for ind. filmmakers &/or films not ordinarily avail. to the community. Deadlines: Aug. 15 & Oct. 15. Contact: Film Bureau, F/VA, 817 Broadway, New York, NY 10003; (212) 673-9361.

**FILMMAKERS' COOPERATIVE** offers rental subsidies up to 50 percent to teachers, librarians & other indiv. users of films & tapes in its collection. Contact: Film-makers' Coop, 175 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10016; (212) 889-3820.

**NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES:** Humanities Projects in Media deadline: Sept. 13. Contact:

## **ELECTRONIC ARTS INTERMIX**

Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI) is a nonprofit media arts center that serves as a major international resource for independent video. EAI's services include distribution, exhibition equipment access and post-production facilities.

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James Dougherty, NEH, 1100 Pennsylvania Ave., NW,  
Washington, DC 20506; (202) 786-0278.

**NEW YORK FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS** Artists'  
Fellowships in Film & Video. Deadline: Oct. 4. Contact:  
NYFA, 5 Beekman St., New York, NY 10038; (212)  
233-3900.

**VIDEO GRANT:** San Francisco Artspace offers access  
to video hi-8 equipment & audio facilities. May request  
assistance for full project or postprod. only. Bay Area  
nonresidents eligible for travel & honoraria up to \$2,000.  
Grants awarded for experimental, narrative, editorial/  
nonfiction & doc. Deadline: Sept. 15. Contact: San  
Francisco Artspace, 1286 Folsom St., San Francisco,  
CA 94103; (415) 626-9100; fax: (415) 431-6612.

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## AIVF NAMES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Following the departure of AIVF executive director Lawrence Sapadin earlier this year, the AIVF board of directors named a successor in May—Martha Gever. Readers of *The Independent* should be familiar with Gever's name from the masthead of this magazine, where she worked since 1984 as editor. Gever is also a prominent film and video critic, freelance editor, and lecturer. She is co-editor of *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures* and the forthcoming *How do I Look?* Her articles have appeared in *The Nation*, *Art in America*, *Screen*, *October*, and *Afterimage*, among other publications. As an active member of AIVF's Advocacy Committee, Gever also participated in the successful campaign to establish, by an act of Congress, the Independent Television Service (ITVS). She was also a visible supporter of public funding for the arts during the controversy over the National Endowment for the Arts and again this year over the proposed cuts for the New York State Council on the Arts.

With this issue, Patricia Thomson succeeds Gever as editor of *The Independent*. For the past four years Thomson served as managing editor of *The Independent* and regularly contributed articles and news stories to this magazine. She has written on film and video for numerous other publications, including *Variety*, *In These Times*, *Back Stage*, *Afterimage*, *EuroMaske*, and *Inside Media*.

Staff changes are also underway for the position of membership director. Newly occupying this post is Alice Ro. Her prior job experience with Planned Parenthood gives Ro an in-depth understanding of the unique character of organizations serving a national constituency. She replaces Mary Jane Skalski, who filled this position since January 1990 and has been with the organization since 1989. Skalski will be moving to Eugene, Oregon, this summer. We at AIVF bid her a fond farewell and wish her the best of luck in her new, more peaceful environs.

## MEMBERABILIA

Congratulations to **Checkerboard Foundation** Video Grant awardees Matthew Schlanger, for *Blowgun*, and David Meieran, Sandra Elgear, and Robyn Hutt for *Voices from the Front*. Norris Chumley earned an **Emmy** Award for Outstanding Performance Program for *Grand Central Dances*. Kudos to Kathleen Sweeney and Jeffrey Marino, acknowledged for Meritorious Achievement by an Emerging Artist at the **Atlanta Film and Video Festival** for *The Lost Notebooks of Amelia Earhart*.

In its final Open Solicitation round, the **Corporation for Public Broadcasting** awarded grants to Linda Litowsky, *We Will Ride*; Louis Massiah, *Home: W.E.B. Dubois and the Nationalist Idea*; Gilbert Moses, *Moms Mabley*; Susan Robeson and Joan Churchill, *Don't Believe the Hype: The*

*Politics of Rap*; Raquel Ortiz, *The Silk Purse*; and Blackside Inc. for a series on the Great Depression and a series on America's war on poverty.

Congrats to **New York Foundation for the Arts** Artists' Fellowship grantees: Skip Battaglia, Alan Berliner, George Griffin, Leslie Harris, Herman Lew, Constantine Limperis, Pola Rapaport, Pedro Rivera and Susan Zeig, Robert Stone, and J.T. Takagi for film; plus Susana Aikin and Carlos Aparicio, Jean Carlomusto, Maxi Cohen, Annie Goldson, Victor Huey, Alexandra Juhasz, Indu Krishnan, Cara Mertes, Shelly Silver, Diane Spodarek, and Mary Ann Toman for video.

Congratulations to Philip Haas, recipient of a **Rockefeller** fellowship. Chris Sharp was awarded a **Peabody Award** for her PBS news documentary, *Backhauling*. **KET Fund for Independent Productions** grants went to Kentucky-based AIVF members Christine Fugate, Joseph Gray, Robby Henson, Heather Lyons, Jean Donahue, and Peter Van Howe. The trailer for Sim Sadler's feature film project *Tossin' & Turnin' (In the Global Economy)* won the Gold Award at **Worldfest-Houston**. Producer Alan Foster received a **Public Television Local Program Award** from CPB for a WGBH news feature on Robert Mapplethorpe.

## THE INDEPENDENT

### EDITORIAL ASSISTANT WANTED

*The Independent Film and Video Monthly* seeks a part-time editorial assistant (average 14 hrs/week). Job responsibilities include proofreading, clerical work, photo research, and magazine production. Must be detail-oriented, well organized, and able to work on deadline. Should have familiarity with and dedication to the field of independent film and video. Proofreading and Macintosh desktop publishing experience a plus. Potential for growth. Salary \$6,500. Application deadline: August 20. Send letter and resumé to: Editorial Assistant Search, *The Independent*, AIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th fl., New York, NY 10012. No calls please.

## New AIVF Publications on Film and Video

### The Next Step: Distributing Independent Films and Videos

*Edited by Morrie Warshawski  
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Leading professionals provide answers to frequently asked questions on distribution of independent films: markets, contracts, financial arrangements, self-distribution, promotion, and much more.

### The AIVF Guide to Film and Video Distributors

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With the largest, most experienced and best equipped staff in town, it's no wonder that our editorial work has increased by 50% in the last year. And it continues to grow. This year we'll be editing a new prime time network sitcom which is being shot in New York, and all of the material for inclusion in the Miss America Pageant in September. In the past year we've edited commercials for Mercedes-Benz, Grand Union, TWA, ShopRite, Oldsmobile, Contac, and A&P as well as shows for HA!, Lifetime Medical, The Comedy Channel, Met Life, The Art Market Report, Toshiba, IBM, and LTV.

And even in these difficult times, you'll find that we continue to improve the working environment for our primary customer, the independent producer who is working with his or her own money. On the culinary side, we added a better lunchtime menu, and cookies and fruit in the afternoon. On the equipment side we added five more D-2 machines, a Rank with Sunburst II for color correcting film

and tape, an AMS AudioFile and audio recording booth, color cameras for the 7 on-line edit rooms, and computerized off-line editing to the seventh floor. Speaking of floors, we'll be utilizing the second floor of our building on 17th Street for the first time in the coming year, bringing to a total of ten, the floors used for NVI customers and the necessary support services.

In terms of equipment, you'll be seeing the introduction of the first all D-2 editing suite in New York City with the installation of The Abekas A-82 Switcher in Edit A this fall, as well as the addition of the exciting new Digital F/X Composium and Wavefront 3D animation to our established electronic graphics department.

And without knowing what our competitors are up to all the time, you can still rest assured that you are getting the most experience, the best equipment and the most accommodating service at the lowest possible price. If you want some help on your next project, call NVI!

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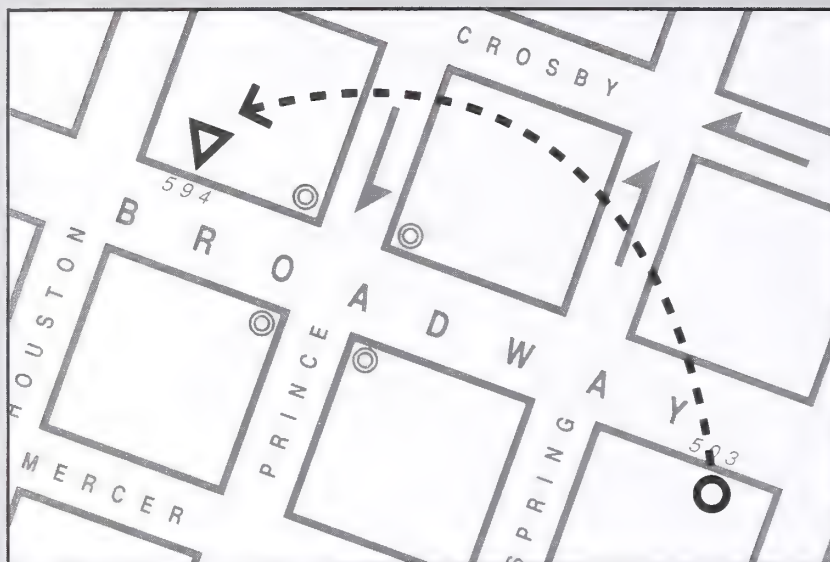
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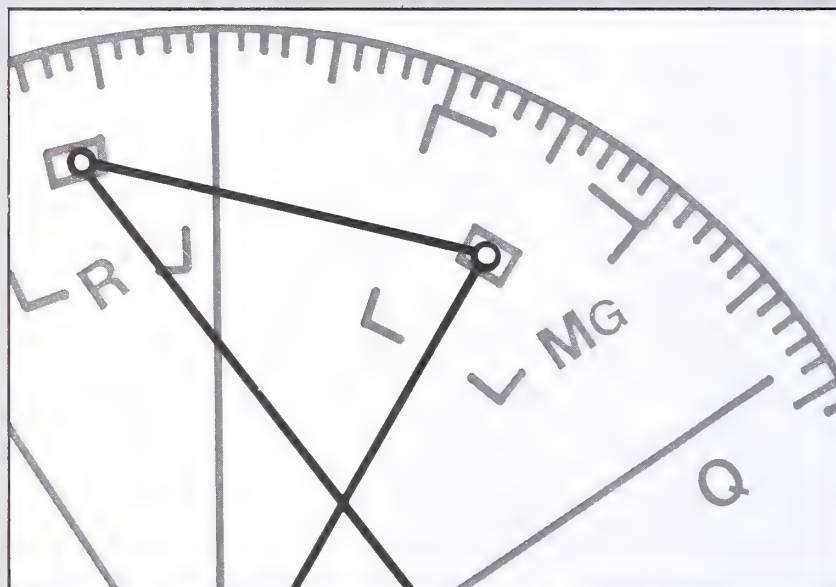
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**COVER:** Archival footage is a necessary component of many film and video productions, but the process of locating and using this material can seem intimidating and expensive to the uninitiated. In "Archival Survival," Rick Prelinger spells out the basic facts and procedures producers need to know to research, duplicate, license, and clear rights to archival and stock footage. Also in this issue is Deirdre Boyle's report on the state of the relatively new field of video preservation. Photo: Buster Keaton in *Sherlock, Jr.*, courtesy Archive Films.

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# TONGUE TIED

## Homophobia Hamstrings PBS

Marlon Riggs' controversial video *Tongues Untied* opens with a poem: "Silence is my shield, it crushes./Silence is my cloak, it smothers./Silence is my sword, it cuts both ways./Silence is the deadliest weapon..../What legacy is to be found in silence?"

Silence is a central theme in Riggs' 55-minute documentary about black gay men which became the center of a controversy over censorship by public television stations. Originally scheduled to air the week of July 16 on *P.O.V.*, the Public

with reviews, information on the program's innovative video techniques and numerous awards, and background on Riggs, who is a faculty member at the University of California, Berkeley.

As this issue went to press, two other programs with gay subject matter have met resistance. *Stop the Church*, a short documentary about a 1989 demonstration at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City by the Women's Health Action Mobilization (WHAM) and AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP), was scheduled to air August 27 but was yanked from *P.O.V.*'s line-up. This time the decision was made by David Davis, president and chief executive officer of American Documentary, which produces *P.O.V.*, who took action even before outside criticism arose. A statement issued by PBS cites the film's "pervasive tone of ridicule" of the Catholic Church as a reason for its decision. Davis told the *Washington Post* that he felt a second controversy without sufficient lead time for stations to prepare the press and community would undermine affiliates' faith in the series.

The other program pulled in the wake of the *Tongues Untied* controversy was Charles Atlas' *Son of Sam and Delilah*, originally scheduled for national broadcast in August on the experimental video series *New Television*. PBS national director of programming Melinda Ward told the *Bay Area Reporter* that she dropped the show from the national feed because of its "gratuitous violence, obscurity, and lack of point and context." As of late August, only three stations planned to run the program in September: WGBH-Boston and WNET-New York, which coproduce the series, and WYBE-Philadelphia. KCET-Los Angeles was considering it.

These cancellations raise questions about whether silence is becoming a theme at PBS as well. "We've always warned that the most insidious censorship is self-censorship," Arthur J. Kropp, president of People for the American Way, told the *Washington Post*. Speaking of *Stop the Church*, he said, "It's a frightening sign when television executives begin to second-guess the far right and pull a long-planned program before it's even been attacked."

The initial controversy over *Tongues Untied* began in June when a few station executives decided not to air the program. Journalists calling around to track the story inadvertently spread the word and the worry. Stations became concerned not only about potential complaints from un-



Marlon Riggs in *Tongues Untied*, one of three programs with gay subject matter that recently met resistance from public television.

Courtesy Frameline

Broadcasting Service (PBS) series featuring independent video and film documentaries, *Tongues Untied* was dropped by 18 of the top 50 market stations and rescheduled by numerous others after it was deemed offensive by some affiliate executives and right-wing activist Reverend Donald Wildmon. Of the 212 stations that carried *P.O.V.* this summer, 104 refused to air *Tongues Untied*, according to Mary Jane McKinven, director of national press relations for PBS. *P.O.V.* co-producer Ellen Schneider told *The Independent* that most other affiliates opted to broadcast it after its regular primetime slot of 10 p.m., sometimes as late as 3 a.m.

Angry, poetic, and powerful, *Tongues Untied* depicts men embracing and uses frank speech, including the word fuck. Well before the program's airdate, stations received preview copies along

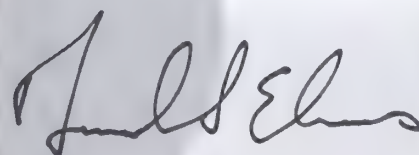




# Fred Elmes on film:

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Fred Elmes won the 1990 Independent Spirit Award for Cinematography for "Wild at Heart." Other feature credits include "The Killing of a Chinese Bookie," "River's Edge," "Blue Velvet," and a future release by Jim Jarmusch.

Photo: James Fee

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nerved viewers, but also about charges being lodged with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), which maintains a review process for indecency cases. According to *Public Broadcasting Report*, the FCC received 13 documented complaints against local stations for airing the broadcast: two against WFYI-Indianapolis and WGUV-Grand Rapids/WGVK-Kalamazoo, and single complaints against KCET-Los Angeles, KERA-Dallas, KETC-St. Louis, KVIE-Sacramento-Stockton, WDSE-Duluth-Superior, WHA-Madison, WHYY-Wilmington-Philadelphia, WPBA-Atlanta, WVIZ-Cleveland, WFYI-Indianapolis, WGUV-Grand Rapids, and its Kalamazoo satellite station, WGVK.

American Family Association (AFA) head Donald Wildmon, who launched previous attacks on public funding for the arts, seized the opportunity to tell the conservative *Washington Times* that public television is running far too many programs about homosexuals. Without having seen *Tongues Untied*, Wildmon called the program "offensive" and encouraged his followers to view the show in order to see how their tax dollars are being spent. *P.O.V.* received \$250,000 dollars of its 1991 budget from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), while Riggs received a separate \$5,000 NEA regional fellowship to produce *Tongues Untied*.

"What stopped us was the language and the imagery," says Robert Larson, station manager of Detroit's WTVS, echoing the sentiment of many station executives who claimed that "the presentation and not the subject" inspired their decision to pull the show. "That decision can be made without even a suspicion that we are anti-gay, anti-controversial, or bigoted," Larson insists.

Riggs believes there's more at issue. "People are far more sophisticated in their homophobia and racism now, so they say, 'We object to language, we have to protect the community.' Those statements are a ruse." Riggs adds, "This is a bona fide expression of black gay men. If they want to deal with this community, they will have to deal with some of these words."

The controversy revealed unexpected patterns of protest and tolerance. *Tongues Untied* aired nowhere in Mississippi, but appeared throughout Georgia. In Michigan, Detroit's WTVS cancelled the show, while stations in the smaller towns of Flint, Lansing, and Grand Rapids ran it as planned.

"It really belies the urban versus rural notion that urbanites are more sophisticated, more open-minded about running something like that," says Robin Burd, an organizer at Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR).

Eric Weston, station manager of Atlanta's WPBA, ran a voice-mail call-in number across the screen during the show encouraging viewers to express their feelings about the program. They received 1100 calls, 56 percent in favor of the screening. "Our mandate is to air different points of view from all sectors of the community, and I would feel we weren't doing our job if we didn't air *Tongues Untied*," says Weston. "Public TV viewers are a very open-minded group and don't want us deciding what they can and cannot watch."

Overall, however, response in support of the program was "rather fragmented, with the exception of a couple of cities," says *P.O.V.* executive producer Marc Weiss. "It's easier to react against something you don't like than it is to rally behind something you support," he explains. Support came almost entirely from small towns, small groups, and individuals. The National Organization of Black and White Men Together, which was holding its annual meeting in Detroit when WTVS cancelled the show, demonstrated in force and received a commitment from station manager Robert Larson to program material relevant to the gay and lesbian community in the future. In Kansas City, ACT UP projected *Tongues Untied* onto the KCPT building during their protest outside. In Seattle, Portland, Oregon, Wichita, and Tampa, ad hoc groups responded on behalf of the program. FAIR, the Gay and Lesbian Alliance against Defamation (GLAAD), People for the American Way, the National Committee for Freedom of Expression, and the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers organized letter writing

and phone campaigns and issued press releases.

Nevertheless, comparable attacks on the exhibition of Robert Mapplethorpe's homoerotic photographs and the NEA funding of Todd Haynes' film *Poison*, which includes a segment titled "Homo" based on writings by Jean Genet, prompted a broader nationwide protest. Says Riggs, "It indicates to me that race and sexuality, black people who are gay and affirming our right to speak and represent ourselves, are all somehow less important than white, male, middle-class gays."

"All TV deals far more often with irreality—not fantasy, but myths of reality," asserts Riggs, "and here public TV corroborated that basic principle of broadcasting." Referring to work by black gay filmmakers specifically, and women, people of color, lesbians and gays in general, Riggs says, "There's a huge deluge coming and [the stations] will be swamped. Whether they like it or not, they will have to adjust. But, of course, they will fight to the end."

CATHERINE SAALFIELD

*Catherine Saalfeld is a media activist and writer living in New York City.*

## NEA MEMO ALLEGES CASTRO CONNECTION

Public access cable group Deep Dish TV and five other National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) grant recipients recently found themselves at the center of another controversy involving the NEA and issues of censorship. In June it was revealed that an anonymous document, presumed to have been written by an NEA staff person, was leaked to the congressionally established Independent Commission on the NEA at its July 1990 meeting.

A secret NEA memo dubbed Deep Dish TV "Fidel Castro's propaganda arm in the US" for having distributed 90 minutes of Cuban TV programming.

Courtesy Deep Dish TV








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The commission, whose 12 members were appointed by President Bush, was created in 1989 to review NEA grant-making procedures and Endowment grant standards after 108 US representatives issued a letter protesting the use of NEA funds for an exhibition of Robert Mapplethorpe's photographs and Andres Serrano's photograph *Piss Christ*. The leaked document, which singled out six media projects applying for funding, characterized Deep Dish TV as "Fidel Castro's propaganda arm in the US" and identified the other projects in terms of their subjects' sexual or political orientation.

In addition to Deep Dish TV, the document named a film by Gregg Araki about suicide among lesbian and gay teenagers; a video by Annie Goldson and Chris Bratton examining the rhetoric of terrorism; a documentary by Joan Jubela about lesbian and gay teenagers; and films on Michael Harrington and Leonard Peletier sponsored by the New York Foundation for the Arts.

"The memo just confirms that the struggle over arts funding is about much more than controversial imagery," says Steve Pierce, executive director of Deep Dish TV. "It's fundamentally a political attack on those who disagree with the status quo."

The reference to Deep Dish TV's relationship to the Cuban government was apparently prompted by the network's distribution last year of a documentary criticizing US government sponsorship of TV Martí, which transmits anti-Cuban programming to Cuba. In addition, Deep Dish TV distributed a one-hour compilation of Cuban television programming. "Our government beams three hours a day of television at Cuba in the interest of 'free flow of information.' We send out 90 minutes in a year and get attacked," says Pierce.

"This new controversy over political content is inseparable from the struggles over sexually explicit imagery that took place last year," adds Chris Bratton, coproducer of a video cited in the memo as placing "emphasis on the Irish Republican Army and the Palestinian Liberation Organization." Bratton says the project proposal did not mention the PLO.

NEA spokesperson Josh Dare says the Endowment does not know where the document came from nor at whose request. "It's very unusual for somebody to put together a document without any indication of its authorship. It could have been from inside the Endowment or from somebody on the outside, but it was obviously written by somebody with an outside political agenda that is not sanctioned by the Endowment," Dare says.

But in the official transcript of the Independent Commission meeting, John Agresto, the commission member who received the document, refers to its author as a "staff person" of NEA chair John Frohnmayer. In addition, the *Nation* reported in its July 8, 1991, issue that an NEA program officer attributed the document to a "White House mole installed in Frohnmayer's office and later fired."

Two other sources, who requested anonymity, reiterated this information to *The Independent*.

In a June 11 letter addressed to Michael Ratner of the Center for Constitutional Rights, who inquired into the memo on behalf of Deep Dish TV, NEA counsel Julianne Davis stated that "the Endowment has taken no action whatsoever with regard to the [memo's] comments, except to dismiss them out of hand."

The *L.A. Times* broke the story in June after uncovering a reference to the document in the commission meeting transcript. Ironically, the controversy surfaced just as Deep Dish TV began airing a new seven-hour series on issues of censorship, *Behind Censorship: The Assault on Civil Liberties*. The series was prompted by last year's controversy over the anti-obscenity oath required of NEA grant recipients.

"When Deep Dish received its 1990 NEA grant, our steering committee considered rejecting the award to protest homophobic contract language," Pierce recalls. "Then we decided a more effective protest would be to use the money for a series on censorship." Transmitted via satellite to home dish owners and 130 public access stations across the country, *Behind Censorship* used a \$35,000 NEA grant to help defray its \$91,000 cost. The series, which opened with a show on the NEA, aimed to put arts censorship in a larger context that also included the subject of political prisoners; censorship in network news and public access cable; and the historic struggles of people of color, women, and lesbians and gay men to have their voices heard in US culture.

All of the projects listed in the NEA document subsequently received funding in the 1990 Film/Video Production category. "In this case, the NEA followed through with the peer panel's recommendations and funded us," says Bratton. "But do they want to be in a position where they have to defend their decisions to fund political work? I don't think so."

KELLY ANDERSON

*Kelly Anderson is a freelance video producer and writer. She teaches video production at Hunter College in New York City.*

## ARGENTINE FILMMAKER FIGHTS MENEM "MAFIA"

Fernando Solanas, the talented and obstreperous Argentine filmmaker, is continuing to loudly criticize the administration of President Carlos Menem despite a shooting attack last spring in which the director was wounded in both legs. Solanas, whose films have been widely shown in this country (his *Hour of the Furnaces* was a seminal work in the New Latin American Cinema movement), was leaving a Buenos Aires film lab with a friend last May when a masked gunman stepped out of a car, motioned the friend to step aside, told Solanas to keep his mouth shut in the future, and then fired at Solanas' feet and legs. While Solanas was being



## Lino Brocka

Courtesy Amayan Multi-Cultural Art Center

transferred to a hospital, he shouted from his stretcher, "We will not be quiet! Argentina is not on its knees. We will continue to denounce this corrupt mafia."

The "mafia" Solanas referred to is Menem's inner circle. Solanas originally supported Menem's effort to succeed former President Raúl Alfonsín in the mid-1980s. But by the end of the decade, he was frequently accusing Menem and his advisors of corruption and cowardice.

Menem has brought a "contempt of public authority" suit against the filmmaker for his remarks, but a similar suit brought against author and newspaper publisher Jacobo Timerman was thrown out of the courts this summer.

The attack on Solanas came at a time of increasing violence and intimidation against vocal critics of the regime, reminiscent of the political terror of the mid-seventies. The same day Solanas was shot, Hebe de Bonafini, president of the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo, an advocacy group working on behalf of the disappeared, received a phone call in which she was told, "We'll get you too, but not in the legs." Both Menem and officials of the Argentine Interior Department have stated that the attack on Solanas seems to have been politically based, and Solanas' case has been taken up by Amnesty International.

Solanas is recuperating in his home in Buenos Aires, but the attack has seriously disrupted the production schedule of his new film, *The Voyage*. The film reportedly contains some symbolic caricatures of Menem and some prominent US officials.

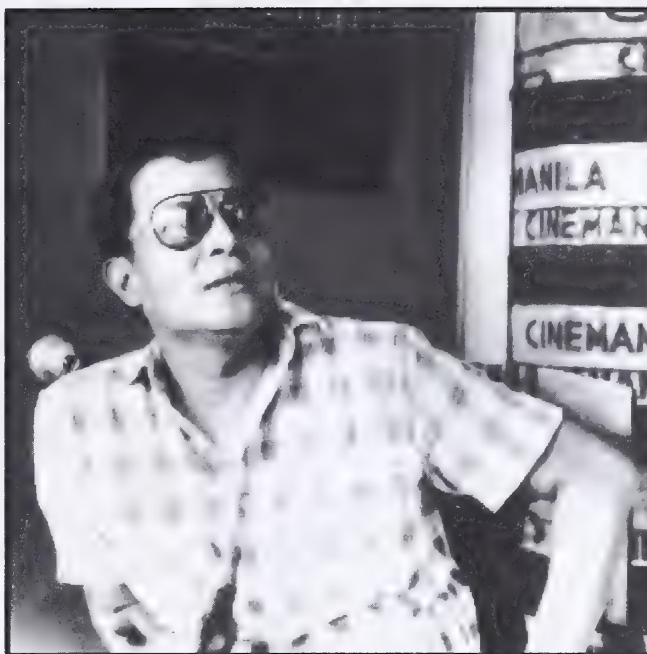
Readers who would like updated information on the Solanas case or who are willing to write letters of support can contact Ralph Arlyck at (914) 485-8489.

RALPH ARLYCK

*Ralph Arlyck is an independent producer who also works with Amnesty International. His latest film is Current Events.*

## LINO BROCKA: 1939-1991

On May 23, 1991, at about 1:30 a.m., after spending the last two hours at a club called the Spindle, Lino Brocka died in a car accident on a lonely road in metro Manila. When he left the Spindle, the



wheels of the car in which he was riding fishtailed and hit an electric post in an empty lot. He was 52 years old with 60 films to his directorial credit, having had a brilliant career of 21 years.

If lives could be rewound like a reel of film, Brocka would be shown working the whole 24 hours of this last day. At the Spindle he had been listening to a new singer who was to appear in his upcoming film, *Touch Me Not*, a story about lepers in a Philippine colony. Shooting was to begin the next morning.

Brocka was born in 1939 in San Jose, Nueva Ecija, an agricultural town in the rice granary of the Philippines. At an early age, he saw in the rice fields how man complemented animal—whole humans reduced to hands and feet. In the 1960s, he went to Manila to study at the State University of the Philippines. He received a scholarship to the East-West Center in Hawaii and, while there, chose to work with Father Damien's leper colony. On his return to the Philippines he joined a people's theater organization, the Philippine Educational Theatre Association, as an actor, adaptor, and playwright.

Brocka's name first appeared in cinemas in 1970 as director of *Perfect Mother*, an adaptation of *The Sound of Music*. Later, his socially conscious films—*Weighed and Found Wanting*, *Insang*, *Jaguar*, *My Country*, and *Pray for Us*—won him international renown in the world of theater and film. Brocka's films were expressions of human life ground down by calculation and routine, of people oppressed by a feudal system in a military regime where scanty food, low wages, and unemployment were the social cancer of the new society.

Brocka was the first Filipino director to have a film screened at the Cannes Film Festival, the first Filipino invited to sit as a juror at Cannes, and the first filmmaker to receive the Asian equivalent of

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the Nobel Peace Prize: the Ramon Magsaysay Award. He also received the Filmmaker of the Decade Papal Award in 1981.

Brocka made his films under tremendous pressure in the 1980s. He led the concerned artists of the Philippines to fight Marcos' state-controlled film industry, whose Board of Censors was endowed with police powers to seize and burn master negatives and whose approval was necessary to show a film inside or send a film outside the Philippines. His films *Bayan Ko* and *Pray for Us*, shot hidden-camera style, were banned by the Board but spirited out of the country and screened at the Cannes Film Festival and in New York. His arrest and detention for joining a drivers' strike was protested by Amnesty International and such directors as Francis Ford Coppola and Costa-Gavras. A cultural as well as a political activist, Brocka succeeded in changing the phrase "freedom of speech" to "freedom of expression" when he was a delegate to the Constitutional Convention after Marcos' fall from power.

A Lino Brocka Foundation for the Arts is being organized in New York. Contact: Marlina Gonzalez-Tamrong at (718) 898-7692 or Sony Dabao-Salvador at (718) 507-7622.

MARINA FELEO GONZALEZ

*Marina Feleo Gonzalez was founding president of the Screenwriter's Guild and founding chair of the Radio and Television Writer's Guild of the Philippines, and was nine years a scriptwriter for National Television in Manila. She is currently administrative director at the Film News Now Foundation in New York City.*

## PHIL ZWICKLER: 1955-1991

Last May filmmaker, journalist, and AIDS activist Phil Zwickler joined the ranks of the many talented filmmakers who have died from AIDS. He was 36 years old.

Having lost his lover to AIDS in 1985, Phil transformed his grief and anger into powerful films that mirror our community's life and death struggle. He produced the award-winning *Rights and Reactions* (1987), a documentary about the laborious passage of the gay rights bill in New York City, and collaborated with filmmaker Rosa von Praunheim in the production of *Silence=Death* (1989) and *Positive* (1990), two films about AIDS in New York City. In *Fear of Disclosure* (1990), Phil collaborated with artist David Wojnarowicz to produce a trenchant exposition of sexual politics which received an award from the Manhattan Borough President's Office.

Several months before he died, I edited his last project, *Needle Nightmare*, which premiered this September at the New York Lesbian and Gay Experimental Film Festival. Bursting with all the anxiety and rage which characterized Phil's state of mind at the time, the video presents a caustic juxtaposition of his implacable voice with pastoral scenes of New York's Blue Mountain deer.



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streams, and lily pads: "I had a case of FUOs: Fevers of Unknown Origin. I call them UFOs of the blood—103, 104, sweating without a cause. What could I do? I just dream of all those different times and places—that is, when I don't feel like killing some politician or wanting to blow up a building. Nobody seems to be doing anything about AIDS."

Phil was the editor of the People with AIDS Coalition's *Newsline*, a monthly publication by and for people with AIDS. Testing the Limits' office is right next door. Through the walls we would hear him scold the government, the medical establishment, and the media day after day, saying, "I don't want to be considered a victim, I'm a person living with AIDS."

DAVID MEIERAN

*David Meieran is sponsored-project coordinator at Media Network and a member of Testing the Limits, whose Voices from the Front premiered at the 1991 New York Lesbian and Gay Experimental Film Festival.*

#### **MICHAEL FLEISHMAN: 1950-1991**

On July 11 Michael Ben Fleishman, director of media arts and information for the South Carolina Arts Commission (SCAC), died of cancer after a brief illness. A leader in the national media arts community, Michael founded and directed the Southeastern Media Institute and the NewView Satellite Teleconference.

A graduate of the University of Florida, Michael studied cinema and photography at the Polytechnic of Central London and was an MFA degree candidate at Ohio University. An award-winning filmmaker, he directed and produced numerous film and video productions, including *A Southern Film Experience*, coproduced with South Carolina ETV, for which he was executive producer from 1983 to 1985. He served on the board of directors of the International Center for 8mm and Video, the National Alliance of Media Arts Centers, and the Athens Center for Film and Video. Former chair of the Artist Development Department and director of the Fellowships Program for the SCAC, he also served on numerous panels for the National Endowment for the Arts, the Atlanta Independent Film and Video Festival, the Contemporary Arts Center in New Orleans, Sinking Creek Film Celebration (Nashville, Tennessee), the Red River Rural Film Festival, and the Southern Arts Federation Regional Filmmaker Tour.

Michael will be very deeply missed for his enthusiasm, dedication, generous and caring nature, and ever-present sense of humor. As a tribute to him, a Michael Fleishman Media Fund is being established through the SCAC. Those wishing to participate may call Susan Leonard at (803) 734-8696.

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## OY VEY BY THE BAY

### The San Francisco Jewish Film Festival

DEBORAH LEFKOWITZ

"We defy the demographics of who goes to the movies and who goes to Jewish events," Janis Plotkin told a near sell-out crowd on the opening night of the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival, held from July 25 to August 8. Plotkin is codirector of the festival, which has become the largest Jewish event in Northern California. In addition to outreach to organizations with already established constituencies, the festival targets young, liberal, unaffiliated Jews not served by these institutions. Audiences this year totaled well over 20,000 and brought a wide range of political views, religious values, and lifestyles to their viewing of the films.

The Jewish Film Festival was created in 1981 by director Deborah Kaufman, who envisioned that it would serve not only as a showcase for new films on Jewish identity and culture, but as a community meeting place and a catalyst for discussion. "We program against the last 40 years of media images," Kaufman explains, "showing films that sensitize rather than sensationalize, and that remove restricted ways

of viewing the world." These films address a wide range of subjects—contemporary life in Israel, World War II, the Jewish diaspora, Jews in the Third World—and often raise issues too controversial to be tackled directly by other organizations in the Jewish community.

The festival looks primarily to independent producers for films conveying complex, nonstereotypical images of Jews. Of the 32 films from eight countries in this year's program, nine came from US independents. Among them was the documentary *Forever Activists: Stories from the Abraham Lincoln Brigade*, by Judy Montell, which portrays the on-going political commitment of those idealistic Americans, many of them Jews, who joined the Abraham Lincoln Brigade to fight fascism in Spain in the 1930s. In the personal diary film *McJew*, filmmaker Michael Young explores the psychological, historical, and political factors that define his mixed Christian-Jewish identity. *The*

*Man Without a World*, a postmodernist Yiddish film by performance artist Eleanor Antin, was one of nine films in the festival directed by women. It explores the memory of shtetl living. "Not *Fiddler on the Roof*," says Antin, "but the sense of early twentieth-century shtetl living which was intense, passionate, argumentative, discursive, poverty-stricken, distressed—all the things that are never dealt with in Hollywood."

Films about Israel provided a special focus this year. This was in part the result of the festival being programmed during the Gulf War, and could be considered another instance of the festival's counterprogramming. The televised images of events in the Middle East, explains Kaufman, "portrayed Middle Eastern people, especially Israelis, either as aggressors or as victims with gas masks." The situation there is more complex, as was demonstrated by the eight Israeli films screened at the festival.

The dramatic film *One of Us*, by Uri Barbash, for example, explores the conflicts between group loyalty and individual conscience. It focuses on an Israeli soldier sent to investigate the suspicious death of a Palestinian during interrogation at an Israeli army base. As the program notes pointed out, the divisiveness of government policy toward Palestinians in Israel was reflected in the film's credits: One government agency, the Fund for Quality Films, takes credit for providing the funding, while another, the Israeli Defense Forces, insisted the film carry a disclaimer denying any resemblance between its contents and reality.

Another dramatic work, *Lookout*, by Dina Zvi-Riklis, was filmed from the perspective of an Israeli soldier at his lookout post in Israeli-occupied Gaza. His job is to observe a Palestinian village. As he watches through binoculars day after day, he becomes caught up in one family's life—and eventual tragedy. The soldier is at once a naive youth, a voyeur, an eventual sympathizer, and a dominating power. There is very little dialogue, only Israeli news commentary emanating from the soldier's radio, which acts as an ironic counterpoint.

*Lookout* provoked an angry response from Palestinian activist May Jabar, one of the guests invited to discuss the film with viewers after the screening. Jabar, who is chair of the Human Rights Commission in San Francisco, objected to the stereotyping of Palestinians and said the film "puts a human face on the Israeli occupation. One could just as easily put a human face on the



Viewing a Palestinian family's plight through an Israeli soldier's eyes, Dina Zvi-Riklis' *Lookout* provoked angry debate at the festival.

Courtesy Jewish Film Festival



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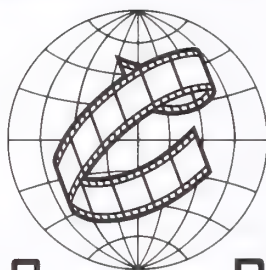
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Life in the old country was also a cinematic subject at the festival, as in Naomi Gryn's *Chasing Shadows*, the story of a town's enchanted life beneath the Carpathian mountains before the Holocaust.

Courtesy Jewish Film Festival

Holocaust." Following these remarks, a discussion took place in the upstairs lobby of the theater. A large group of people gathered to sort out their feelings and reactions to the film with Jabar and therapist Deborah Weinstein as facilitators. Both Jabar and Weinstein have been active participants in Palestinian-Jewish dialogue groups.

The fact that a therapist was present to facilitate discussion is certainly unusual for a film event. However, it demonstrates the depth of discussion that is typical of this festival. One Israeli said he was very hurt by Jabar's comments. From his perspective, the film opposed the occupation by showing the unhealthy dynamics resulting from Israeli power over Palestinians. Another Israeli commented that although the film may not portray the truth for Palestinians, it reflects an enormous change in the Israeli perspective, which she applauds. Other viewers debated the question of how accurate a picture the film conveyed and whether *Lookout* should be criticized for depicting exceptional rather than typical encounters between Israeli soldiers and Palestinians.

This kind of discussion is certainly one of the best aspects of the festival, and time and again audiences responded with great interest. After the screening of *All Jews Out*, a documentary on the Third Reich's persecution of the Jews of Goepingen by German-US filmmaker Emanuel Rund, viewers were still engaged in animated conversation with the director several hours later. The fact that festival screenings all took place in the same theater also meant that viewers could seek out filmmakers later in the week for continued discussion. The festival invited not only filmmakers, but also scholars, critics, and community activists to interact with audiences. This year additionally featured a scholar-in-residence—writer and feminist Letty Cottin Pogrebin. Pogrebin presented a lecture on Jewish women in film and moderated a panel discussion on blacks and Jews that addressed questions of racism in both communities.

The first week of the Jewish Film Festival was held at the Castro Theater in San Francisco. The entire program of films and events was then repeated during the second week at the University of California Theater in Berkeley. One of the advantages for filmmakers attending this festival is the opportunity to see their work projected on a large screen in a theater with 1500 seats—an increasingly rare occurrence in these days of multiplex cinemas.

Since a relatively small number of films are





screened at this festival, each is given individualized attention and publicity. Kaufman and Plotkin devote much time to the kind of outreach efforts familiar to independent filmmakers—telephone calls to related organizations, specialized mailings, and follow-up on personal contacts. In fact, Kaufman says she learned a lot from friends who were involved in the successful outreach campaigns of such independent films as *Northern Lights* and *The War at Home*. Press coverage of the festival winds up being very good, although not every film gets reviewed individually.

Kaufman and Plotkin also try to attract distributors and local theater owners to the festival. Explains Plotkin, "If we can find a receptive audience and then have distributors at the screening, we hope we can help launch a film." *Kaddish*, for instance, by independent Steve Brand, opened theatrically in San Francisco after playing at a previous edition of the Jewish Film Festival.

Although the festival takes place in late July, its three-person office remains open throughout the year, acting as a national resource center that provides consultation to community groups, filmmakers, and educators about the use of Jewish film. The office receives an average of three telephone calls per week from organizations seeking advice on film titles or distributors. In response to this level of interest, they have recently published *A Guide to Films Featured in the Jewish Film Festival*, which lists all films screened during the last 10 years. This guide also includes a chapter on how to put together a Jewish film program from start to finish. Such efforts serve not only exhibitors, but also filmmakers, who benefit from the continuing publicity for their films long after the festival is over.

*Deborah Lefkowitz is a Boston-based independent filmmaker whose documentary Intervals of Silence: Being Jewish in Germany was included in this year's Jewish Film Festival.*

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## LIEN ON ME

## Film Foreclosures and Movie Labs' Legal Rights

JONATHAN B. ALTSCHULER

"It's a wrap," the D.P. shouts and the day's shooting ends. The next step is postproduction, where the editing, mixing, and myriad other steps take place. The first stop in the postproduction process is at a motion picture laboratory, where the film negative is delivered for processing and developing, the making of dailies and, further down the line, the answer print, corrected print, and finally release prints.

Because a lab is normally the custodian of original film materials during postproduction, it may have legal rights that can severely hamper a filmmaker's claim to his or her own films. If a lab's legal prerogatives are not fully understood, a person could wake up one morning and find that a film for which he or she owed the lab money was

lien nor the New York Motion Picture Film Laboratory Lien has to be filed in a government office, such as the County Clerk or Secretary of State. It is thus a "secret lien" and not public knowledge that would be found in a title search.

In most states a laboratory's rights are no different from an ordinary artisan's lien. But in New York, a film foreclosure proceeding entitles a laboratory to auction the film on which a producer is defaulting together with its distribution and exhibition rights. Further, the law also permits a lab to foreclose on *all* films the filmmaker or distributor has deposited with it, whether or not payments are due for them. In order to avoid the lab's so-called "cross-fertilization" rights, filmmakers should try to enter into a written agreement with New York labs limiting the lab's foreclosure rights to each film as it is deposited in the lab.

Laboratories are generally reluctant to give up

ited 12 other films in the lab for processing. No prints were made of the new films and no money was due for work performed or to be performed. Nevertheless, the court held that since prints were struck for *Scalp*, the lab could foreclose and sell the negatives and distribution rights for all 13 films to pay the lab bill.

The court was careful to point out that a lien only becomes effective when a print is struck. Development of a negative only or a dupe negative does not give the lab the right to sell the distribution rights in a foreclosure sale. As a practical matter, purchase of a motion picture without any distribution rights is worthless. However, it is also true that ownership of distribution rights without having any rights to the physical materials also has limited value. Of course, the successful bidder in a lienor sale can only obtain the rights of the defaulting parties. These may be limited, particularly if it is a distributor rather than a filmmaker in default.

A more complicated situation occurs when both the defaulting owner and film laboratory have original materials in their possession, as was the case in *In re Film Ventures International Inc. (FVI)*. In that dispute TVC Laboratories, a New York film laboratory, asserted its rights under Section 188 for film materials delivered to it by FVI in a bankruptcy proceeding in the Central District Court of California. Both TVC and FVI had original film materials for many of the same films.

Bankruptcy Court Judge Barry Russell upheld TVC's lien on the materials in its possession, as well as the distribution and exhibition rights. The lab's rights were not affected by the Bankruptcy Code and would not be defeated by a bona fide purchaser.

The court also recognized that TVC's rights, including the distribution and exhibition rights, were not exclusive. FVI had the same rights as TVC to the materials in its possession. The court resolved this dilemma in a Solomon-like decision, granting FVI a 90-day period to sell the rights to its pictures, with TVC receiving 50 percent of the proceeds up to the amount of its claim. TVC also had the right of first refusal, allowing it to match the highest offer from an outside party. The court finally held that if a sale were not completed within 90 days from the date of the order, either or both parties could sell their nonexclusive rights to a third party and keep whatever monies they received.

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**I**n New York, a film foreclosure proceeding entitles a laboratory to auction the film on which a producer is defaulting together with its distribution and exhibition rights.

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sold at a foreclosure. Even worse, if the producer has other films deposited in the lab's vault, these too may be sold, leaving the filmmaker with a lot of blood, sweat, tears, and money spent, but no pictures.

This article highlights the legal pitfalls a filmmaker may run into when depositing a negative with a lab, with suggestions for minimizing the risk of a film foreclosure. The object is to ensure that a lab will work with you and not be an unwanted foe in court.

New York and New Jersey are two states that have special film laboratory lien laws. In New York, this is found under Section 188, entitled "Lien of Motion Picture Film Laboratories." In general terms, a lien is a legal right that may be exercised over property in satisfaction of a debt the owner of the property owes to another person or entity. It is sometimes known as an artisan's lien. For example, a shoemaker may hold the shoes he repairs until he is paid. Neither an artisan's

these rights, but they are negotiable. The degree of negotiability depends upon a number of factors, including the state of the marketplace, the prior relationship between lab and filmmaker, and the financial reliability of the filmmaker. Because these are legal documents, a filmmaker should consult a lawyer before he or she negotiates with a lab.

The disastrous results that can occur when a defaulting filmmaker fails to protect him- or herself from cross-fertilization rights at the outset are illustrated in *21st Century Distribution Corp. v. Studio 16 Film Labs Inc.* In this case, 21st Century requested the lab to make a negative and prints of a motion picture titled *Scalps*. After 21st Century failed to pay for the work on schedule, they negotiated an agreement assigning certain of their accounts receivable to Studio 16 in payment of the bills. The prints and negative were then released to 21st Century, but the company remained in default. Time passed, and the distributor depos-



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In order to foreclose a lien and sell a film at auction, a laboratory must serve personally or by mail a "Notice to Owner of Sale" on all parties the laboratory knows have an interest in the film. These are generally the parties specified at the time the materials are delivered to the lab. An owner does not necessarily mean the actual owner of the film (i.e., the filmmaker), but can mean the party who deposited the materials in the lab for processing, such as a distributor. The notice must contain a statement of the account, interest, auction costs, and reasonable attorney's fees, which is all the lab is entitled to keep. At auction, if there is a bid in excess of the amount the lab is entitled to, the surplus is returned to the owner of the film. However, typically at an auction sale the highest bid is a token amount bid by the lab itself.

The notice must also contain a description of the materials sought to be sold at the auction, their estimated value, and the date, time, and place of the lienor sale, as well as a time when the materials can be examined before the sale. The notice must be published once a week for two consecutive weeks in a newspaper in the city or town where the sale is to be held, and the sale cannot be held less than 15 days after the first publication.

The New York Lien Law provides that within 10 days after service of the notice, the owner or anyone also entitled to notice may bring an action to determine the validity of the lien. As a general rule, courts do not favor foreclosure proceedings if they are defectively brought or are incorrect. Because the service and notice rules are complicated and may be the basis of a legal proceeding to set aside a lien sale, a defaulting filmmaker should consult an attorney when he or she receives the notice.

Two cases in the New York courts illustrate issues that can be raised in a proceeding to test the validity of the lien and the pitfalls if no precautions are taken.

In *Lily Pond Lane Corp. v. Technicolor*, a producer deposited film materials with Technicolor Labs. He then defaulted in payments and the lab served a Notice of Sale to sell the lien film materials. The producer brought an action to prohibit the sale, alleging that the debt had been deferred by mutual agreement until funds were paid to the producer from his distributor.

The court granted an injunction, stating that permitting a foreclosure sale to go forward would endanger Lily Pond Lane's ability to negotiate and market the film and impair its reputation in the marketplace. For those reasons, a preliminary injunction of the sale was issued until after a trial that would determine whether there in fact was an agreement to defer payments. So in this case the lab could not foreclose under the New York Lien Law.

Generally a producer's failure to pay a lab comes about because of a lack of funds and not because the lab has performed in a defective manner. There are situations, however, where the refusal to pay comes about because the producer believes the work was not done properly.

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Courts do not favor foreclosure proceedings if they are defectively brought or are incorrect. The service and notice rules are complicated and may be the basis of a legal proceeding to set aside a lien sale.

What can the producer do under these circumstances if the lab refuses to turn over the materials until it is paid? One solution occurred in *Angelika Films Inc. v. Urban Entertainment Associates, Inc.* In that case the Optical House lab and special effects and animation firm Peter Wallach Enterprises asserted that the distributor and the producer, Urban Entertainment, owed it money. Relying on Sections 180 and 188 of the lien law, Optical House and Wallach asserted that they had possessory liens and refused to turn over the film materials until they were paid.

The producer sought another solution, which the court granted. This permitted the producer to obtain possession of the film prior to judicial settlement of the dispute by filing a surety bond—i.e., making a cash deposit into court. This insured that the lienors would be paid if the court ultimately determined that the producer's position was incorrect. In making this decision, the court reasoned that the lienors were only entitled to the guarantee of payment, if their position was upheld. They did not have the right to hold up the picture as a wedge to getting paid.

The use of a film laboratory is one of the many steps necessary to complete a picture. Because of its unique position in the process, the lab has many legal rights which have to be addressed at the outset. How and when to pay the lab and the various legal rights that must be understood and, where possible, modified by negotiation are important factors that must be addressed. Without taking precautionary steps based on a clear understanding of the film laboratory's legal rights, an unsuspecting filmmaker may suddenly find that he or she has lost everything.

*Jonathan B. Altschuler is an attorney practicing in New York City who specializes in motion picture law.*



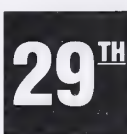
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# ARCHIVAL SURVIVAL

## The Fundamentals of Using Film Archives and Stock Footage Libraries

RICK PRELINGER

**T**HE LAST DECADE HAS BEEN GOOD TO FILM ARCHIVES AND STOCK FOOTAGE libraries. Increased interest in archive and library holdings has exposed many hidden treasures. At the same time, the artifacts have stimulated a reexamination of this century's history and preconceptions. Some independent film- and videomakers make good use of these resources, but many others are intimidated by high prices, arcane policies, and complex procedures. Here are a few navigational hints designed to demystify the process of locating and using archival footage.

Many difficulties producers encounter can be avoided through careful planning and a willingness to be flexible. When starting any project that may employ archival footage, it is imperative to obey seven basic commandments:

1. If the success or failure of a production depends on the inclusion of specific scenes or images, determine at the outset whether the images actually exist, who holds them, and whether you can afford to duplicate and license them. Some famous stock shots don't in fact exist, including Khrushchev's shoe-banging at the United Nations and the bespectacled 3-D movie audience (which are actually both still photographs). If feature film clips are necessary for your portrait of an activist actor, make sure that the actor's studio(s) will release the clips and get an idea of the costs involved.

2. Seriously consider hiring an archival researcher with expertise in the area of your production. Quite frequently researchers can find more alternatives more quickly for less money. Their experience can make them valuable collaborators and even reshapers of your original concept.

3. Negotiate your licensing deals as soon as you think you know the footage you want to use. Film libraries dislike extending discounts after a production is finished, and they have no incentive to do so.

4. Before your final cut, define your primary distribution media, markets, and territory, and decide which rights you can afford to clear. As the number of distribution outlets have multiplied, rights have too. Contracts now cite such rights as "nonstandard television," "laserdisc," "pay-per-view," "audiovisual," and "multimedia." Territory is also a consideration in pricing rights. Distribution territory may be broadly defined to cover the United States or North America/Europe, or one may choose to narrowly target an audience, such as French-speaking Belgium. Many rights holders require full payment before releasing master material. A production with foreign

sales or home video potential is useless if it must be shelved for want of license fees.

5. Get all the rights and clearances you need. In order to reuse certain footage, you may need to obtain special rights. This is especially important when reusing footage from feature films, television programs, and musical and theatrical performances. Remember to clear music rights, get the consent of recognizable individuals appearing in the footage (or their estates), and possibly that of certain unions (Directors Guild of America and Writers Guild of America). Ultimately, you must decide between putting everything you want in your show and having it sit on the shelf, or clearing what you can afford and having a product to distribute legally.

6. Investigate the actual costs of research and duplication. Libraries charge for their research time and generally mark up duplication costs. Costs may be surprisingly high if the footage you need is dispersed in several repositories, if your editing ratio is high, or if master material is expensive to duplicate.

7. Filmmakers: Choose your duplication format and, in cooperation with your lab, flowchart the handling procedure for different kinds of original material. The preproduction phase is the time to choose between negative and positive, 35mm and 16mm, black and white and color, and all other options.

There are four principal issues involved in planning for archival productions: research, duplication, licensing, and clearances.

### RESEARCH

Film- and videomakers employing preexisting images will either need to do their own research or employ a researcher to find, clear, and oversee the duplication of footage. Perhaps 250 individuals in North America make their living as film and video researchers. Many bring extensive experience and a bulging Rolodex to their assignments. Often these researchers can cut through red tape and find unexpected gems. A researcher's assistance, if it can be afforded, is often decisive in making a show really work. The costs they save often exceed the price of hiring them.\*

\* See David Thaxton, "Some Thoughts about Film and Video Research," in *Footage 89* and Christine Whittaker's prefaces in the last two editions of *Researcher's Guide to British Film and Television Collections*, published by the British Universities Film and Video Council. Both are available from Prelinger Associates, 430 W. 14th St., Rm. 206, New York, NY 10014; (800) 243-2252.





Budget considerations will force many independents to perform their own archival research, which is not a bad thing. There is no better way to refine your sense of a project than to peruse the holdings of an archive. On the way to finding the images you originally sought, you will see fascinating and possibly useful work. Though there is no substitute for experience, with practice most makers can learn how to find images.

A good starting point for producers considering the use of archival or stock footage is *Footage 91: North American Film and Video Sources*, published by the author's company, Prelinger Associates. We first undertook this project five years ago because no comprehensive listing of footage sources existed anywhere. To date, this two-volume directory remains the only such list. It describes the holdings and policies of over 1,740 film and video sources and is intended to be a source of ideas as much as an index. *Footage 91* comprises detailed descriptions of media collections ranging from the Library of Congress to the Minnesota Zoo. It also contains a directory of professional film and video researchers. *Footage 91* has just been published as a CD-ROM disk for Macintosh computers, which contains the directory along with 35 other databases listing the contents of stock footage libraries, archives, distribution catalogs, and reference books.

In addition, most commercial stock footage libraries and a number of institutions, such as the National Archives, make available free finding aids and fact sheets that detail their policies and procedures.

Research also involves decisions relating to the cost and ownership of the images you may seek. For instance, should you attempt to license copyrighted footage or restrict your efforts to public domain (PD) materials? Under US copyright law, works may fall into the public domain for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to: expiration of a copyright's first (28-year) term; final expiration of the second (renewal) term; or publication (prior to 1978) without proper copyright notice. Many public domain materials may be physically controlled by libraries or collectors who charge

**In 1946 the US government used half the world's supply of film to document their atomic tests at the Bikini Atoll. For *Radio Bikini* (1987) director Robert Stone spent five years obtaining the formerly classified footage from some 20 archives.**

Courtesy filmmaker

access fees. There is no license to be granted, so when you pay someone for access to a copy of a PD work, you are simply entering into a contract with the owner of the physical materials. Public domain status does not relieve you from the obligation to fulfill the terms of the contract.

You should review PD agreements with care and be satisfied that the images are indeed out of copyright. If your production will have high visibility, you may wish to research the relevant copyrights at the Library of Congress' Copyright Office or purchase a report from one of the companies specializing in copyright searches. Note that some public domain works may contain elements that must be cleared in and of themselves (such as proprietary characters, talent, music, and underlying literary rights). Many PD films are not PD outside the United States.\*

Although a great deal of highly desirable and rare footage is available only from commercial stock footage and newsreel libraries, there are still many opportunities for the adventurous researcher. There may be surprising holdings within government archives, local history collections, organizations and trade associations, attics and basements, and in the collections of other independent producers. Many of these collections may contain public domain material and make it available at a reasonable cost. Although no list per se of low-cost sources exists, hundreds are described in *Footage 91*.

\* Excellent fact sheets are available at no charge from the Copyright Office at the Library of Congress; (202) 479-0700. Especially recommended is Circular R22, *How to Investigate the Copyright Status of a Work*.

Using outtakes obtained from NARA in her experimental video documentary *History and Memory: For Akiko and Takashige*, Rea Tajiri juxtaposes scenes from a US government film on Japanese relocation with footage illicitly shot by internee David Tatsuno.

Courtesy filmmaker

Although Khrushchev's shoe-banging outburst doesn't exist as a moving image, his famous "kitchen debate" with Vice President Nixon does, as seen in Robert Stone's new documentary on the Cold War space race, *Satellite Sky*.

Courtesy filmmaker



Well-known alternatives that have proven useful sources of footage for independents include the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA); government agencies such as NASA and the Department of Defense (whose media productions are in the public domain); organizations and trade associations whose mandate may include assistance to media producers; and certain archival collections.

NARA's Motion Picture, Sound, and Video Branch holds the Universal Newsreel collection, the only newsreel library neither under copyright nor controlled by a stock footage library. More often than not, Universal's availability has made it possible for those on a low budget to gain access to newsreel footage. Many items in this collection (especially those dating from 1950-67) can be dubbed by researchers themselves. Microfilm copies of the card catalog are available from NARA, and companies such as Film/Audio Services in New York City specialize in researching and supplying footage from this vast collection.

Unlike almost all other archives NARA permits researchers to bring in their own equipment and dub videotape copies of public domain materials from the publicly accessible three-quarter-inch and VHS decks. This policy has permitted broadcasters, footage researchers, and resellers—many employing Betacam decks and time-base correctors—to accumulate huge footage libraries. Unfortunately many of NARA's reference tapes are poor-quality screening copies.

The experienced researcher knows free isn't always free. Although the vast holdings of NARA are available (with a few exceptions) to anyone for any purpose without license fees, research and duplication there can be expensive. It is generally impractical to view or procure footage from



NARA without paying a personal visit to their research facility in Washington, D.C., or hiring a freelance researcher to do so. This may be out of reach for many independents, especially if they are far from Washington. NARA's duplication fees often tend to exceed those charged in other situations, only complete rolls are copied, and fewer technical alternatives may be available. For example, NARA's most recent price list quotes \$475 for one hour of film-to-Betacam SP transfer, plus \$34 handling charges for the first item selected and \$7 for additional items.

## DUPLICATION

Plan duplication carefully and get an estimate before you authorize it, as it is very easy to overspend in this area. Some kinds of original material may be expensive to duplicate, and the cost of complicated orders may exceed the cost of licensing the footage if different facilities (each with their own minimum orders) are used. In addition, archives may place certain restrictions on duplication due to rarity or condition of material. Most require that material be printed or transferred at laboratories of their choice. Almost all stock footage libraries require full payment of license fees before releasing master materials (clean videotape or unscratched film elements), releasing only time-coded tape or scratched film prior to payment.

Some stock footage libraries offer film-to-tape transfers of less than broadcast quality. These can cost as little as \$25 per hour, compared to \$300-500 for airable transfers on a Rank Cintel or Bosch. This option should be considered in cases where image processing or manipulation is your goal and overall image quality is less important. "Reference-quality" video transfers have increased in popularity during the last few years, because they permit producers to transfer a great deal of material for editing only. If a time-code reference (which doesn't necessarily have to be SMPTE time code) is burned into the image, tape can later be conformed either to film original or to videotape masters. Thus, many filmmakers, especially those working in the compilation genre, avoid the cost of a workprint and unnecessary lab work by rough-cutting on videotape.

## LICENSING

A library or archive will generally require a user to sign a stock footage agreement and pay the appropriate license fee when master materials are ordered. Agreements should be reviewed with care, preferably by an attorney or other qualified individual familiar with licensing issues.\*

\* See Philip Miller, "Licensing Footage: Copyright and Other Legal Considerations," in *Footage* 89. Also see fact sheets provided by various stock footage libraries, available on request.





**No time to drive to your local archive? WPA Film Library's CD-ROM system gives producers instant desktop access via modem to essential information about library holdings, including the British Pathe collection (pictured).**

*Courtesy WPA Film Library*

independents who find themselves "needing something that you can't really fake."

Stock libraries peg license fees to specific media and markets. A license for the educational, nontheatrical market generally costs less than network television. Cable (pay and basic), home video, and world television rights (sometimes by specific territory) are all possible add-ons. Plan ahead as best you can; it is almost always cheaper to make one deal at the beginning than it is to renegotiate later. Bear in mind that methods of distribution are constantly evolving and being redefined. "All media" licenses are generally your best bet if you anticipate a long life for your production.

A recent initiative launched by National Video Resources (NVR), a project of the Rockefeller Foundation, may help bring the cost of home video rights under control. Producers of public TV and educational programs who subsequently seek home video rights often have to return to libraries to relicense archival footage at a fairly high cost, according to Kenn Rabin, a Boston-based re-

searcher who was archival film coordinator for *Eyes on the Prize* and is now a consultant to NVR. For programs using a great deal of footage, such as the *Eyes* series, relicensing sometimes necessitates a new round of fundraising. NVR's new program, called the Rights Project, seeks the commitment of major archives and stock libraries to offer home video rights to legitimate independent producers at a discount, if all rights are cleared at the same time. NVR director Gretchen Dykstra emphasizes that this initiative, which will be officially announced sometime this fall, is "mutually beneficial" to producer and licensor. Producers get a price break, and participating archives and libraries will increase their overall business.

Most of the large commercial stock footage libraries are located in New York and Los Angeles. However, several large and many small collections are located between the coasts. These regional libraries are frequently involved in business other than stock footage licensing and may offer footage at dramatically reduced rates. Of the 260 companies identified in *Footage 91* as "stock footage sales libraries," over 100 are regional libraries whose offerings include nature, wildlife, industrial, and local history material.

What options can one consider when faced with a stock footage bill that's completely out of reach? First, don't give way to the temptation to use the footage without obtaining proper licenses. If you have entered into dealings with a commercial footage library, you can be sure they will follow your project and be aware of its impending release or airdate. Most libraries have experienced this situation before and will meet it squarely with the threat of a lawsuit. Most are willing to go to great lengths (including contacting distributors and broadcasters) to enforce their control over their materials.

Second, be candid with your footage sources. Involve them in the





**Computerized cataloging simplifies sleuthing at Archive Films. Holdings range from Buster Keaton's iconic comedy to this 1939 footage of Polish peasants in Warsaw moments before a Nazi bombing raid.**

*Courtesy Archive Films Stock Footage Library.*

progress of your production. Try to craft a payment schedule that relates to project income in some way. From their viewpoint, the "billable event" occurs either when they release master materials to a production or when the production is finished, regardless of whether or not the production is profitable. It's difficult to get an unsuccessful producer to pay an overdue invoice.

Third, if all else fails, return master materials to their licensor and consider searching for appropriate footage elsewhere. If you end up using the same footage obtained from a different collection, prepare to prove this to the first source.

Barter is another option for the producer with little or no budget. Labor, services, or even outtakes can be offered in return for footage usage. Many stock footage libraries are very small businesses whose equipment and service needs may resemble your own. Some libraries, especially those specializing in public domain material, trade footage for outtakes, old films, or other material suitable for relicensing.

## CLEARANCES

Many producers wish to use clips from feature films or well-known television programs because of their familiarity or iconic character. Unfortunately securing permission for such usage is neither simple nor cheap. Studio-produced product must be cleared through the studios' business affairs departments and hefty license fees are charged. Due to contractual or other restrictions, some clips may be temporarily or permanently unavailable for reuse. Studios also require prospective licensees to secure talent and guild clearances. The net effect may be to render feature (as well as music, dramatic, or performance) clips unusable for most independents. When filmmaker Mary Lance cleared several feature clips for a film to be shown only within the Henry Ford Museum, license fees ranged in the "low- to mid-thousands" per brief clip. To clear feature clips for wider distribution, Lance says, is "astronomically expensive."

An alternative in some cases may be to use public domain feature films or television programs. Again, producers should be aware that the determination of public domain status can be complicated, especially outside the US. The use of public domain footage doesn't relieve producers of the responsibility to clear talent, guilds, music, and any underlying literary

rights. It is prudent to seek the assistance of a good attorney in these matters.

Recently many independents, especially experimentalists and activists, have elected to use copyrighted or proprietary footage without obtaining clearances. Due in part to the impossibility of inhibiting home taping, this trend is dramatically on the increase. Some makers take refuge under the leaky umbrella of "fair use,"\* citing historical, newsworthy, or critical considerations, but such a defense cannot be recommended unless one has the services of a competent attorney. Most "footage outlaws" simply assume that no one will

ever notice what they do.

The flaw in this reasoning is that the presence of uncleared footage in a production quite simply renders it unairable and undistributable unless it is altered. If there is any possibility that the work will be distributed or broadcast, it is the maker's responsibility to obtain the required licenses for any preexisting copyrighted material used. Critically minded independents, historians, and journalists may enjoy some insulation from the harsher provisions of federal copyright law—but are you prepared to be a test case?

Related questions further complicate the lives of makers. What are your responsibilities if you incorporate copyrighted images in modified form, whether reportioned, reprocessed, or with "censor bars"? Strictly speaking, copyright law forbids unlicensed appropriation of a copyrighted work. However, many independents interpret this to mean that unrecognizable appropriation is permissible. As Jem Cohen asks, "If I zoom in on an incredibly grainy shot of one person's head in a crowd, is it morally okay, ethically okay? What is fair game?" Unfortunately, there is no clear answer to these questions.

A parallel phenomenon exists in the pop music industry, where digital sampling of a voice or distinctive sound was tolerated until songs incorporating sampling rose high on the charts. Now sampling is raw material for litigation and public debate. At this point, there is little legal precedent to guide independents, but makers should simply be aware that unauthorized appropriation may not be acceptable for broadcast or distribution.

In the past few years, hundreds of new libraries have opened their doors, existing sources have made it considerably easier to gain access to material, and standard licensing contracts have been torn up in favor of more flexible arrangements. Despite these trends, the stock footage industry still functions much as it has since the 1950s. Though new licensing perspectives and retrieval technologies promise, at least in theory, to streamline footage research and licensing, those currently seeking archival footage must still learn how to make the system work for them.

*Rick Prelinger owns an archive of advertising, educational, and industrial films, and frequently consults with independent mediamakers and archives.*

\* For more details on fair use, see Sheldon Siporin, "When Fair Is Foul: Fair Use and Copyright," October 1990, and Patricia Thomson, "Sleuth: The Search for Television News Footage," March 1988, in *The Independent*.



# VIDEO PRESERVATION

## Insuring the Future of the Past

DEIRDRE BOYLE

ON JUNE 14, VIDEOAKER AND DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY TELEVISION CO-founder Keiko Tsuno left a symposium on video preservation early, because DCTV was celebrating its twentieth anniversary with a party that evening. When she arrived at the lower Manhattan production center, she discovered a clumsy plumber had put a two-by-four through a pipe, flooding DCTV's tape archive. Amidst party preparations, staffers scrambled to rescue tapes and set them out to dry. Later that weekend, a fire occurred uptown at public television station WNET. The blaze knocked out phone lines and smoke penetrated basement rooms where videotapes are stored. Whether ominous coincidence or elemental warning, the alignment of these events makes it clear: *video is an endangered medium*. If we are to safeguard video's multifaceted history, preservation must become a national issue.

The Video Preservation Symposium Tsuno attended was part of a broader initiative by the New York-based Media Alliance, which included a survey of video collections, research, and publications. More than 60 participants from as far away as San Francisco and Toronto gathered in the trustees' room at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) for the day-and-a-half symposium, which Media Alliance organized together with the New York State Council on the Arts, with additional funding from the National Alliance of Media Arts Centers.

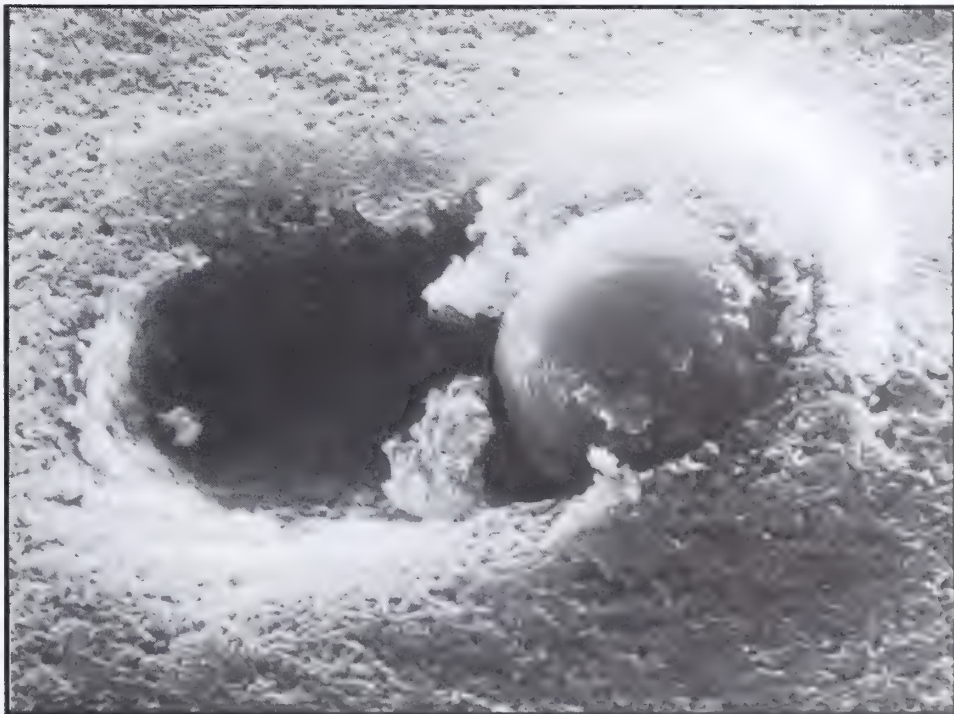
The museum rolled out the red carpet for the producers, archivists, catalogers, curators, distributors, and librarians. The symposium began with an evening screening of early video art and documentary tapes selected by MoMA's Barbara London and Sally Berger. Afterward Joan Jonas, Skip Blumberg, and Philip Mallory Jones spoke briefly on the importance of video preservation from the maker's perspective. Jones, who organized the Ithaca Video Festival during the seventies, admitted he had lost track of the whereabouts of much of his own early work. The following day he discovered several archives had copies of tapes he thought were lost forever. Jones' experience pointed up a theme of the symposium: the essential preservation partnership between independent video producers and archivists.

Unlike the world of film, which has developed a funding base and professional corps to carry out its preservation mission, video has yet to develop such an infrastructure. The symposium was the first to convene key figures involved in independent video preservation. Its purpose was to identify and share information about collections; to network information on conservation, cataloging, and archiving techniques; to discuss priorities for future funding and services; and to interface with national archival initiatives. Some, if not all, of these goals were met.

### COLLECTION MANAGEMENT

The first morning was devoted to issues of collection management. It began with a report by this writer on the 1991 *Survey of Video Collections*. Media Alliance surveyed over 100 institutions and individual producers in the US and Canada to learn more about video collections and preservation.

Elizabeth Scheines, systems manager/coordinator of the Program for Art on Film at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, next spoke on how to organize and maintain a video collection, offering practical advice relevant to both individual videomakers and institutions. Assessment of a collection—going through the physical material to see what one has—is the first step in figuring out your priorities for preservation.



The dust particle: videotape's number one enemy.

Courtesy Lewis Whitaker, DDI.





**Bridging the generation gap in Berks, Pennsylvania, which boasted the world's first split-screen interactive cable system. This video was among the many programs rediscovered, cleaned, and remastered by David Shulman for his history of public access TV, *Turn It On, Tune It In, Take It Over*.**

Courtesy David Shulman

**Video editor Andy Mann battling the constraints of open-reel tape, as featured in the Raindance collective's *Flash Pasteurized* (c. 1972).**

Courtesy Raindance

The first component of preservation is to secure a proper storage facility. This need not be a thermal vault. It can begin with an air conditioner in the room where you store your tapes. Next, determine how you want to use your tapes. Even if a collection is just for personal use, think of setting it up as a research facility, if only to do your own research. This will make it easier when you want to interface your information with others.

The third component is to set up some rudimentary cataloging system (any system is better than none at all). It is enough to have a card catalog with titles, running times, format, artist names, where you acquired it, and where you are keeping it. Start by marking the boxes of all tapes with an accession number. Since some works are untitled or duplicate other titles in a collection, accession number plus title will make life easier.

There are several logical approaches to shelving tapes. If it is your own work, chronological sequence may make sense. If you have a large collection of circulating (or playable) copies, then you will want to shelve this collection separately from your archival masters. Shelving schemes should be designed for maximum access to a collection for users and maximum safety for archival masters. *Never shelve circulating and archival collections together.*

Although standard cataloging systems are used, most people wind up devising their own. Computer software makes it relatively easy to customize a system. Scheines recommends dBase 3, dBase +, and dBase 4. In developing your own system, think ahead to who may be using it, not only today but in the future. You will want to share some information, but not all will be for public knowledge—e.g., acquisition or rights information may be confidential—and this will affect how you program your PC. A good beginning is to be able to generate searches by title, artist, and accession number.

Standardized union cataloging systems exist in public libraries and museums, but they are geared to books and art objects, not videotapes. The Library of Congress set up MARC (machine readable cataloging) as a national standard, and although it has been adapted to film and video, it is not ideal. The National Archival Moving Image Database (NAMID), a project of the National Center for Film and Video Preservation (NCFVP), is a union system expressly designed for video and film. One advantage of interfacing with a union system is the ability to download cataloged information, saving time and effort over original cataloging when it already exists. When your title is a unique property, you may not be able to avail yourself of the time-saving properties of a union catalog, but sharing your information through a national database will help others searching for information about tapes you hold.

Scheines doubts that there will ever be a time when everyone has the same cataloging software and computer hardware, so there is no need to get rid of whatever system you already have. If you are beginning, you may want your computer software to be compatible with union cataloging software (e.g., NAMID uses Minaret software and its compatibility with MARC is currently being explored). Many people wind up with two systems: an idiosyncratic internal cataloging system and a standardized external one, which is costly, inefficient, and cumbersome. But until there is an established, standardized, union cataloging system for video, Scheines recommends having both systems, however unorthodox the suggestion.



Joan Jonas' *Vertical Roll* (1972) was among the recently remastered works screened at the Video Preservation Symposium.

Courtesy Museum of Modern Art

Standardization needs to be developed if we are to be able to search each other's databases. Being able to share information will help in identifying where tapes are located, deciding how to spend acquisition budgets, developing more targeted funding proposals, facilitating interlibrary loan of circulating tapes, and determining how best to allocate limited time and resources for preservation.

In the discussion that followed Scheines' presentation, video artist Tony Conrad raised the dilemma of how to assess a collection when tapes will not play. In response, videomaker David Shulman explained his "triage system," developed while producing an anthology of early portable video. When presented with a box of unplayable historic tapes, he grilled the producers, jogging memories about what had been recorded, who shot it, and what was interesting about it. "While you'll miss things, it's one way of making decisions about what to restore," Shulman confided.

The broader question of what to restore was pursued by Kate Horsfield of the Chicago-based distributor and archive Video Data Bank, who expressed concern about the fate of collections existing outside large organizations. Work already in distribution is most likely to be preserved, she asserted. "What we're doing is deciding history based on factors we're living in this minute. But history is larger than that. The big issue is figuring out what *was* there and how to pull it into the system again."

MoMA's film cataloger Jon Gartenberg passionately voiced concern that the whole history of independent media may disappear because of prevailing economics and a lack of attention. He reminded the audience that there is a whole intellectual tradition of dealing with the organization of information. Individuals responsible for video collections can borrow upon the systematic approaches and expertise of film and print archivists. "People do not have to reinvent the rules," he said. Archive consultant Alan Lewis similarly urged the video field to associate with professional archive organizations on the local, regional, and national levels. Organizations like the Association of Moving Image Archivists (AMIA) offer basic manuals and documents outlining tried and true steps for dealing with collections.

## CONSERVATION TECHNOLOGY

The first of two afternoon programs led participants through the complex realm of conservation technology. Comprehensive costs range from \$200 to \$300 an hour to clean, restore, and remaster a tape. Leanne Mella, moderator and associate director of the Katonah Museum, and Stephen Vitiello, distribution coordinator at Electronic Arts Intermix, compiled a list of services currently available in the New York area [see box on page 28]. These are not recommendations, so caveat emptor. They range from full-service outfits—equipped with obsolete formats, time base correctors (TBC), signal processors, and the latest formats for remastering—to small facilities where you supply the obsolete format. Unfortunately, there is not much difference between the low- and high-end costs for preservation. Most



nonprofit facilities offer simple cleaning of half-inch AV tapes and remastering onto three-quarter-inch without a TBC—a fairly low-cost method for preservation, since it is the price of remastering to contemporary formats that adds on the big bucks.

In surveying the field, Mella discovered that institutions with large collections often falter in starting up a preservation effort when faced with the high cost of cleaning and remastering as many as 500 tapes earmarked for rescue. Many people she surveyed said they were still waiting for reliable solutions priced within their means.

Shulman next provided an illustrated demonstration of the equipment and techniques he developed for cleaning half-inch open-reel videotapes [see "Déjà View: Restoring and Remastering Open-Reel Videotapes" on page 32 of this issue]. This was followed by an illustrated technical lecture on videotape and disc, with information on formats past, present, and to come, by video engineer and consultant Mark Schubin, the symposium's Mr. Wizard.

Schubin began by differentiating the three media involved in archiving video: the medium the artist used, the one the archive has selected to preserve the artist's work, and the one the exhibitor uses to circulate it. Often the ideal format choice for these three uses will not be the same. Since no video medium has stayed in use more than 30 years, chances are good that the artist's medium will not be the medium the exhibitor or archivist chooses. Other criteria such as cost, speed, flexibility, and capacity will dictate format. Exhibitors will also be influenced by such factors as simplicity of use, commonality, and repeatability of playback. When the medium for each use is not the same, one runs into transformation loss (when using one format to store another) as well as generational loss (degradation caused by copying a tape).

The single archive criterion is to last perfectly forever, but since videotape has no history before 1956, no one can say how long it will last. As for perfection, transformational loss alone precludes meeting that standard. Undaunted, Schubin weighed the advantages and disadvantages of the various existing formats for preservation. Although 35mm black and white film can last 100 years and probably 200, since silver halide as an image-storing mechanism has been around nearly that long, its disadvantage is transformational loss. Transferring video to film changes it most from what

## Facilities for Cleaning, Restoring, and Remastering Videotape

### Audio Plus Video

240 Pegasus  
North Vale, NJ 07647  
Diane Falcicola; (201) 784-2813

### Backtime

225 Lafayette St.  
New York, NY 10012  
David Shulman; (212) 431-7781  
Restoration of old format 1/2" open-reel videotapes.

### Caesar Video

137 E. 25th  
New York, NY 10010  
Jeffrey Antkers; (212) 684-7673  
Can bump to any contemporary format through a range of signal processing equipment. Client must provide source deck.

### CTL Electronics

116 West Broadway  
New York, NY 10013  
C. T. Lui; (212) 233-0754  
Can transfer 1/2" open-reel AV or CV to Beta, 3/4", or 1".

### Devlin Productions

1501 Broadway, Suite 408  
New York, NY 10036  
John Krams; (212) 391-1313  
Can transfer 1/2" AV and CV, IVC 1", and 1/2" PAL to most contemporary formats, including premastering for videodisc. Restoration services include cleaning, signal upgrade with infinite window TBC, digital noise reduction, and image enhancement.

### Electric Film

87 Lafayette St.  
New York, NY 10013

Chris Martinez; (212) 925-3429  
Client must provide 1/2" open-reel deck; can transfer to Beta or 1".

### Electronic Arts Intermix

536 Broadway  
New York, NY 10012  
Ivar Smedstad or Stephen Vitiello; (212) 966-4605  
Can transfer from 1/2" open reel, including 1/2" color using a Sony AV 8650, to 3/4". All dubs are time base corrected. Developing a cleaning process.

### Intercontinental Televideo

29 W. 38th St.  
New York, NY 10018  
(212) 719-0202  
3/4" and 1" PAL transfers to NTSC 1" or Beta SP.

### Obsolete Tape Transfer

1234 South Hampton Road  
Philadelphia, PA 19116  
Joe Pagano; (215) 464-3158  
Can transfer from the following: 1" Ampex, 1" IVC, Panasonic NV series 1", Sony EV series, Sony AV and CV, V-Cord 1/2" cartridge, Betacord 1/2" cartridge, Akai 1/4" open reel, Quad. All original masters are cleaned, frame synchronized, and remastered to any contemporary format.

### Sony Technical Support Services

Sony Magnetic Products of America  
Technical Support Services  
Highway 84 West  
Dothan, Alabama 36301  
Steve Tice; (205) 793-7655  
In response to requests from the field, Tice built a machine to clean 1/2" tape

and offered it free to museums, libraries, and other nonprofits with collections. Inundated, Tice no longer offers the service but will provide a description of the machine for those interested in building one. Basically it is an audiotape transport stripped down to bare essentials, with sponges for dry cleaning solution attached to capstans.

### Standby

536 Broadway  
New York, NY 10012  
Maria Beatty; (212) 219-0951  
Can facilitate bumping to any format if client provides source deck.

### Technisphere

21 E. 19th St.  
New York, NY 10003  
Jack Goldman; (212) 777-5100  
Can bump clean tapes from 1/2" AV to Beta, 3/4", or 1" (soon to D2). Uses a Panasonic 3160, which is particularly forgiving of old tape.

### Unitel Video Services

515 West 57th St.  
New York, NY 10019  
Carl Levine; (212) 265-3600  
Can bump from Quad to contemporary formats.

Additional information about sources of obsolete equipment can be obtained by contacting:

### National Center for Film and Video Preservation

American Film Institute  
JFK Center  
Washington, DC 20566

Susan Dalton; (202) 828-4070  
Currently setting up national database of obsolete formats for videotape preservation.

### Andy Warhol Videotape Preservation Project

22 E. 33rd St.  
New York, NY 10016  
Mirra Brockman; (212) 683-5300  
Can provide a printout of names of roughly 50 people in the United States and abroad who specialize in unusual formats.

### Experimental Television Center

180 Front Street  
Owego, NY 13827  
Ralph Hocking  
Hocking has proposed a Resurrection Bus, a mobile video restoration service. The van would be equipped with all the technology needed to clean and remaster old video: obsolete and contemporary formats, frame synchronizers, proc amps, etc. Cleaning equipment with instructions could be made available in advance at regional media arts centers. The bus would then travel in New York State directly to videomakers/owners for remastering to contemporary formats. Hocking, who owns most of the archaic equipment, is willing to research the costs and logistics of making such a service available provided there is sufficient interest. If you would like this service to materialize, contact him by mail.

STEPHEN VITIELLO  
AND LEANNE MELLA

the artist originally intended. The advantage to using optical disc is that it is a noncontact medium. The player will not hurt the disc, and flinging discs like frisbees will not hurt them much either. But discs have the shortest history (since 1978), and they have already developed major problems. Thus tape is the most likely candidate for a video preservation medium.

Tape is afflicted by a variety of problems. The only truly serious magnetic problem is **print through**, the magnetization of one tape layer by another. For audiotape, it is noticeable when you get a pre-echo—a muffled sound that precedes the recording. This occurs only at longitudinal audio frequencies and is a problem for ordinary audio recorded on videotape but not for digital audio on videotape. For video, print through's effect is increased noise; for digital, it is increased errors. Print through is always worse heading towards the outer layer of tape. Leaving the tape tails out, then rewinding to play back will reduce the occurrence of print through.

Binder deterioration is caused by hydrolysis, when water breaks down into hydrogen and hydroxyl ions and causes chemical deterioration. Very high humidity and condensation are the chief culprits, causing softening and brittleness. High temperatures can also cause **shedding** (loss of oxide from

the magnetic layer), which is not so serious because it is the upper level of the oxide, and **adhesion** (sticking between layers of tape). **Stiction**, a contraction of stickiness and friction, can be caused by either the binder being soft and sticky and grabbing onto things, or the binder being soft and pressed extremely smooth in storage. Metal tape has no binder, which could be great, since the binder is unquestionably the worst factor for tape storage. But metal tape has an even shorter history than oxide tape, and in that brief history problems have occurred. Another common binder problem for videotapes made prior to 1970, before antifungal agents were added, is the growth of mushrooms on the tape.

Since the base produces static, it attracts dirt—tape enemy number one. Other problems caused by the base include deformation, when the tape is wrinkled or **cinched** (a problem most likely to affect tape made before the addition of back coating, which reduces static by reducing the charge). **Stretch** and **shrink** are not critical problems, since most TBCs can handle them, but sudden temperature change can lead to cinching. A stiff tape, which people like for editing, may not make contact in the edges on a stationary head, causing poor audio and even poor control track response.



This will make a tape unplayable when there is nothing wrong with it beyond a head-contact problem. The 3M company will groove the head so tape edges fall at this point. The head will wear, but uniformly, because of the grooves.

Schubin opposes using chemical cleaning agents on old formats, explaining that introducing a new chemical factor into the unknown binder is just asking for trouble. However, "As far as nonchemical cleaning goes, I'm not at all opposed to it." Schubin recommends something like Shulman's design, where the cleaning gauze is constantly moving to get rid of the bad material. He also recommends 3M's "Evaluating the Evaluators,"\* which rates good and bad cleaners and explains how they work. Schubin doesn't suggest cleaning a tape every time it is played, but says first time out of the archive is probably a good idea.

Cassettes and reels are the source of several problems. U-matic cassettes lack a lock, so reels are free to move around in storage, which can cause cinching. Open reels are subject to adhesive residue. If a piece of adhesive was attached to hold the tape in place, Schubin recommends snipping off two inches, the only sure way to get rid of the adhesive. Other problems encountered include lack of protection from dirt (exempt are D2 and D3, which completely seal the tape), mechanical deformation, improper manufacturing and design of reels, and thermal deformation (e.g., when you leave a tape in a sunny car window).

Schubin does not recommend using any intercept cleaner on the playback machine. As Jewish Museum media coordinator Stephen Paintner pointed out, commercial cassette cleaners invariably scrub away dirt from the center of the head and push it up and down into the grooves, clogging them. Dirt on the heads then passes onto the tape, which may prevent it from playing. Instead Schubin recommends cleaning the machine with proper cleaning swabs. Still better, since tape is abrasive and cleans the heads through normal play, he suggests running a blank stiff tape like Sony's D16, but not too often or it will wear down the heads.

The playback machine can cause wind problems. **Popped strands**, when one strand of tape pops up on a coiled tape, can cause serious edge damage. Since the audio or control tracks are recorded on an edge, damage to the edge can affect the machine's ability to read the control track. Other wind problems include **stepping**, when a bunch of strands move out of alignment, and **windowing**, when a tape did not wind smoothly, causing a little window where you can look through the tape to the other side of the reel. The latter is not a problem until you put the tape into storage, where it can fold over on itself and cause deformation. When it comes to tension, too much causes stretching and too little causes cinching. Machine wear will cause tape stretch, poor wind, poor head contact, scratching, and bad tape geometry. Mechanical and thermal stress can also be caused by the machine if something worn causes more friction than the tape can tolerate. Lastly, machines offer poor protection from dirt.

The number one problem and easiest one to fix is horizontal orientation of tapes. *Never store a tape horizontally, always vertically.* Horizontal

storage means winds will separate, causing stepping and edge damage.

Regarding thermal shock, very high temperatures (in excess of 120° F) will progressively cause cassette deformation, adhesion between layers, stretching, and eventual shrink. Never put a tape in an oven to dry it out. Relatively high temperatures will affect creep, print through, and shrinkage. Conversely, low temperatures (in excess of -40° F) will cause a brittle binder and some base shrink. The higher the humidity, the more severe the hydrolysis, the greater the risk of tape stretch. Low relative humidity causes static buildup. If you keep your archive at a very low humidity, you will need two days before playing a tape to allow it to adjust to playback conditions.

Ordinary magnetic fields are insignificant, as are radiation fields, according to Schubin. (To hurt your tape, it would take more radiation than would kill 250,000 people.) Schubin offers this general rule of thumb: When you are comfortable, so is your tape. That is not the *ideal* condition, which is to store it at low temperature and low humidity. At least try to ensure a normal office environment, with air conditioning and reasonable humidity.

Laser disc (which includes CD-V, CDI, CDTV, CD-ROM, and photo CD) has been around for 13 years, and four problems have already been found: (1) oxidation of the aluminum reflector, causing dropouts to become severe (Kodak has switched to gold for its photo CD); (2) delamination, or separation of the reflector, whereby the reflector moves and the disc cannot be played back; (3) occlusion of the protective coating, which happens when the disc gets scratched or dirt on it (dirt should be washed off a disc; otherwise it can eat into the plastic); and (4) severe warping, which is rare.

Currently the most popular disc is the magneto-optical disc, a form of optical recording where a laser is used to heat a spot above the Curie point, allowing an external magnetic field to affect its magnetism as it cools. All erasable discs use some version of this process. It may prove wonderful, but we have no experience over time with it as yet.

When deciding which video format to choose for remastering, there are both technical and nontechnical considerations. What did the artist shoot in originally? Are there operator parts and services available? Can you exchange the tapes with others? Is the equipment commonly available? You must also decide on analog versus digital, composite versus component, and the quality you want. When you digitize an analog signal, there will be a transformational loss. Otherwise, digital is a magnificent format, allowing you to make clones—copies with no generational loss, often surpassing the original with error correction and perfect digital signal added. The problem with digital is that it costs more and takes up more space than other formats—but this will change soon. Choosing composite versus component depends primarily on which format the artist used. If the artist shot in component, to preserve that quality you need to archive in component.

Schubin believes the future is in cassettes. Even discs will be in cassette form to avoid dirt and scratching. Magneto-optical discs are already in cassettes. There is an unquestionable trend towards digital tape and, for discs, the magneto-optical format, because it is erasable and recordable. Also on the horizon are coding techniques that will allow a CD-sized disc to record two to four hours of video, as well as perpendicular or quasi-perpendicular recording. Orienting magnetic information perpendicularly takes up less space, allowing you to pack in, say, a year's worth of recording onto a single VHS cassette. Currently this can be done on floppy disc, but

\*"Evaluating the Evaluators," *Technical Bulletin*, 1990. Available from 3M Company, Magnetic/Audio Video Products Division, 3M Center, Building 223-5N, St. Paul, MN 55101.



Filmmaker and former choreographer Yvonne Rainer didn't know that her flag dance *Trio A*, performed in 1970 at the Judson Memorial Church, had been captured on videotape until this summer, when Jon Hendricks, who had a copy of the reel-to-reel tape, had it restored.

Courtesy John Reilly

When guerrilla TV proponent Michael Shamberg took a portapak to Vietnam in 1971, he produced the first ENG (electronic news gathering) footage—recently restored by Shulman—of the living room war.

Courtesy Raindance

not on a helically-scanned tape recorder. As to high-definition TV, Schubin believes this presents many more problems and will not solve any of those you may have now. Schubin concluded that wood, glass, and metal shelving were equally good for storage.

Following Schubin's presentation, he and others elaborated on a wide range of technical considerations. In response to archive consultant Alan Lewis' question about what equipment should be included in the written specs for a preservation job, Mella explained that some facilities charge extra for certain equipment, like frame synchronizers or infinite window TBCs. Others charge a flat rate, such as \$150 an hour, which includes all kinds of equipment. Find out what is being offered and then decide if it meets your needs, she advised. Mella added that she chooses a facility she has confidence in, has them evaluate a tape, alert her to any extraordinary measures and expenses, and provide an estimate. Shulman disagreed, finding an evaluation phase unrealistic. "It requires as much time and effort to evaluate an old tape as to fix it," he commented. "If you don't let the (original) tape run continuously from beginning to end, you will positively damage the tape and cause dropout wherever you stop it—severe damage at worst, minor dropout at best."

When asked how long a one-inch preservation master can last under optimum storage conditions, and how long before it must be migrated to another medium, Schubin replied, "If storage is done right, most tape manufacturers say you'll get 100 years out of the tape." Asked whether one-inch is optimal, he added, "If you're making a one-inch tape and buying a bunch of one-inch machines (so you'll always have them after the one-inch format goes away) and you're maintaining those machines perfectly and storing the tape perfectly, it is arguable that one-inch is slightly better than D2, because you can get TBCs for one-inch that have greater detail than D2. But if any of those conditions are not the case, then—other than the fact that we have no history with them—either D2 or D3 would be better for composite, and D1 for component."

Shulman, who has remastered from VHS onto one-inch, added a pitch for this smaller format. "VHS is a surprisingly forgiving medium. It's not trying to lock into the servo or the signal. Without any TBC—dirt cheap—you can usually get a good transfer of open-reel tapes to VHS. You can't really edit it with color material or broadcast it. But you'll generally get a stable image relative to the original. We're talking about low-definition TV—250 lines of resolution. So you don't actually lose a lot of definition when you go to VHS. The decision is really about what you can afford."

## FUNDING

The New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) is one of the few funders that has had a category of support for video preservation within the last three years. In her presentation, NYSCA program associate Deborah Silverfine stressed the need to rethink how to go about finding funding sources. The New York Council for the Humanities told her they were interested, and the New York State Library reported it has funds for preservation of materials,



but they do not get many applications. The National Endowment for the Arts has funded preservation through its Folk Arts, Media Arts, Dance, and Museum programs. NYSCA has funded studies and pilot projects for low-cost cleaning and remastering and assisted organizations in their storage, cataloging, and remastering projects. Another source is the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, an agency of the National Archive. The National Endowment for the Humanities has preservation in its guidelines, but rarely funds it. The video projects they have funded relate to oral history or local history.

Silverfine noted that funders care about audiences, urging that we consider tying preservation projects into exhibitions. "Taking work past the preservation stage to creating an audience and a literature for it is attractive to funders, not only in the arts but also in the humanities," she said. NYSCA staffer Gerald Lindahl remarked that there are also archive-specific funding sources. "If you are an archive or even *look* like an archive, you can ask for archive-related support." But he warned against approaching a funder and saying, "I want to preserve all my tapes," because open-ended projects attract no support. It is far better to make a selection of tapes based on a historical rationale or identifiable framework.

Gregory Lukow, deputy director of the National Center for Video and Film Preservation at the American Film Institute in Los Angeles, added a number of points about the difficulty of funding video preservation. "The last seven or eight years' experience has shown that developing new private funding for moving image preservation—which is what the NEA had in



mind when [NCFVP] was created—has proven very difficult. Ironically, we are now going back to other avenues within the federal government. We think the NEH's Office of Preservation is a well-funded division. They've been concentrating on newspapers and brittle books, but our discussions with the director have led him to be more interested in funding moving image preservation." Lukow continued, "A number of preservation projects were funded through *access* categories of various federal agencies, in part because they don't quite know yet what videotape preservation is. They're confident about extending public funds for film preservation, because it promises a long-term payoff of hundreds of years, but there's no such promise with video preservation."

The NEH rejected NCFVP's application for a grant to develop a national public policy planning statement on moving image materials, with special emphasis on television and videotape preservation. But the NEH will entertain another application NCFVP is currently sending out to the field for comments. This statement will be a significant topic at next month's meeting of the Association of Moving Image Archivists.\*

"Video preservation has not become as strong as film preservation because the field hasn't put pressure on institutions—whether governmental, private, or otherwise," MoMA director of film Mary Lea Bandy forcefully added. "Some organizational means should be pursued to get lobbying efforts heard around the country."

## PROPOSALS AND INITIATIVES

The symposium concluded with participants discussing a number of new initiatives. Archivist Rick Prelinger urged the formation of a self-supporting Consortium for Safe Storage of Magnetic Media, which he saw as one way of avoiding the ever-shifting political decisions on what tapes get saved. Although many were enthusiastic about the idea, upstate librarian Mary Keelan criticized the solution for avoiding issues raised earlier. "Without some centralizing of information," Keelan worried, "the world will never know what exists and where it is." Shulman raised another objection: "What happens if you have a warehouse of tapes, and you can no longer maintain the facility?"

Robert Haller, general director of Anthology Film Archives, surprised the audience with his offer to store tapes in the archive's on-premise, climate-controlled facility. He quickly clarified that he was not promising to clean and remaster tapes "in 15 minutes," but simply provide storage space for work that could eventually be cataloged and remastered when time and money permitted. His object was to keep people from trashing their tapes.

Such storage space is critically needed. As SUNY/Buffalo media professor Gerald O'Grady lamented, major collections are being lost because archives are not willing to accept them. O'Grady cited the difficulties experienced by the families of the late video artists Ed Emshwiller and Stan

VanderBeek in locating appropriate archives for their collections. O'Grady noted that filmmaker D. A. Pennebaker has established a foundation in New York City called Living Archives and is accepting historic work for storage. Other storage options might be available at Visual Studies Workshop in Rochester and Pacific Film Archive in San Francisco, although no firm offers were put on the table.

When selecting off-premises storage sites, counselled Alan Lewis, check the building's location—e.g., is it near a railroad track where a propane tanker could torch it? Make sure environmentally sound storage can be proven. Have them deliver hydro-thermographic graphs regularly. Know what goes on in storage on weekends and overnight. Go there occasionally: check if overhead sprinkler pipes or air conditioner condensing units leak onto tapes. "And by all means, disperse your collection. Don't keep your masters and your distribution tapes in the same place. It's only asking for trouble," he emphasized.

One major initiative currently underway is the National Archival Moving Image Database project of NCFVP. The goal of NAMID director Margaret Byrne is to catalog 22,000 titles of video art and documentary. Each entry will provide title, maker, running time, and numerous other fields of information, including who holds the tapes. The database currently has 6,500 titles, reported Byrne, who has targeted 10-12,000 titles by year's end. To help her assemble a master list, she appealed to those with information about historic tapes to contact her. Such information would give NAMID an invaluable reference point for identifying "lost" titles and forgotten works.

Another NCFVP project is the compilation of a database of existing obsolete video equipment. This is being coordinated by Susan Dalton out of NCFVP's Washington, D.C., office. Anyone in need of information about the whereabouts of a half-inch CV portapak, for instance, can write for a printout of available equipment. No recommendations will be provided, simply where to find equipment. Mirra Brockman, media consultant for the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, offered to provide a printout of names of people in the United States and abroad specializing in unusual formats.

MoMA's Barbara London observed at the end of the long, productive symposium that "What we have been talking about all day is *trust*." Whether finding equipment buried in some SMPTE engineer's garage, getting cataloging information from elusive artists, unearthing lost tapes and hidden archives, or lobbying federal agencies and private funders to allocate monies for urgent preservation needs, video preservation requires trust among people working together to secure a vulnerable and significant history now and for future generations.

*Deirdre Boyle, who was the project consultant for the Video Preservation Symposium, is a video critic and historian. She is a senior faculty member in the communications department at the New School for Social Research in New York City.*

*This article is excerpted from Boyle's full report on the Video Preservation Symposium, commissioned by Media Alliance, 356 West 58th St., New York, NY 10019; (212) 560-2919*

\* The Association of Moving Image Archivists will hold their annual conference November 5-9 in New York City. Registration is \$135 (incl. all sessions, breakfast and lunch for three days, reception, and archival screening). For registration form and further information, contact: Trudy Barnes, NCFVP/AMIA, 2021 N. Western Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90027; (213) 856-7635.

## DEJA VIEW

### Restoring and Remastering Open-Reel Videotapes

DAVID SHULMAN

In 1967 Sony began marketing its first portable video format. Initially dubbed the Video Rover, this half-inch, open-reel, battery operated, black and white recording system later took on the more generic name of portapak. Sony's initial marketing strategy, which targeted the consumer home movie market, was an abysmal failure. But the medium could not have arrived at a more propitious moment in history. Its popularity among hippies and guerrilla TV proponents would soon confound the marketers.

By the early 1970s Sony was selling about a 1,000 portapaks a month. This adds up to 100,000 over 10 years. If every portapak owner shot only 10 hours of tape, that's a million hours! These ancestral video scrolls embody the birth of all facets of independent video—video art, public access, electronic journalism, and a wide variety of experiments in collectivized production and humanistic communication. Much of this work may be gone forever, and much else deemed unwatchable experiments in real time TV. But even more remains stored away in closets, basements, and attics, under beds and on dusty shelves, waiting patiently for its day of rediscovery.

## RESTORATION

A commission from the UK's Channel Four to produce a compilation program highlighting some of the earliest examples of public access and community TV in the US led to my investigation of the restoration and remastering process. The project's technical research assistant, Suzie Wheling, and I began in blissful ignorance of the nightmarish problems that lay in store, such as video heads quickly and repeatedly clogging as tapes ground to a sticky, screeching halt. The goal quickly became finding out precisely what was causing the problem and discovering the safest, most efficient method for getting the tapes to play back smoothly—if this was at all possible.

In researching the problem, we made contact with scientists at NASA after learning that they had retrieved and were trying to restore the oxide-based data tapes that went down with the space shuttle Challenger. We also talked to chemical engineers at IBM, 3M, and Sony and had many conversations with enterprising independent producers who have experimented with various home methods for restoring old open-reel tapes. Some

"Send us a tape and we'll send you one back, no shit!" was the credo of the April Video Co-op (AVC). One of AVC's "natural TV" expressions was *Up in Downsville* (1971), a lyrical portrait of the life, culture, and changing seasons of a small community in upstate New York. The program, produced for a community-owned cable system with 250 subscribers and no bureaucracy, captures the magic of a small town seeing itself on TV for the first time. The tape had not been viewed for close to 20 years when it arrived on Shulman's desk with the note, "Good luck, I've given up trying to get it to play back."

Courtesy April Video Co-op.





remedies seemed very risky—baking in ovens, immersing in mineral spirits, using alcohol or film cleaner. Others were a lot safer and did the job, such as setting up a film rewind system and using a dry, clean cloth or tissue. But this was a very slow and tedious process, especially when confronted with hundreds of hours of material.

Eventually we tapped into an extensive body of knowledge concerning tape technology, including tape maintenance systems, that had been around for decades but was being applied to computer datatapes. As it turned out, computer datatapes were also half-inch oxide-based tapes that had the same problems over time as videotape. Eventually we located a system used for datatape maintenance in New York City, on which we were allowed to run a test. (The equipment manufacturer has since gone out of business, a victim of hard drives and floppy disks.) The system works like a large upright playback and rewind system that channels the tape past a series of self-forwarding dry wipes and crystal blades. The carefully aligned blades are designed to remove contaminants from above the oxide surface without disturbing the oxide layer itself.

A tape engineer was consulted about the applicability of the system for videotape, and subsequently some small but important modifications were made for safety reasons. An unplayable videotape was respooled onto a computer reel and put to the test. After several passes over the wipes and blades, the tape played flawlessly for its full length. Given the scope of our project, a system was purchased. The same results were obtained for the hundreds of tapes that followed.

It is commonly believed that what prevents

open-reel tapes from playing is the oxide flaking off and clogging the heads. By extension, it's thought the tape will only be good for one pass. But what is perceived as oxide coming off is actually residue from the tape backing which has contaminated the oxide surface as a result of the wind. Self-contamination results from outdated formulas for tape backing, unstable resins used as oxide binders, and years of dust, smoke, and other environmental contaminants attracted to videotape's static charge. All of this contributes to **stiction**, the sticking of the tape to the tape-path surface and the number one playback problem for open-reel tapes.

Tape restoration will resolve the stiction problem. Although tapes can be played back as often as you like after they've been restored, they should be remastered within a couple of months because the self-contamination process is ongoing. If you wait too long, the tape may have to be recleaned to get a smooth playback.

The problem called **flaking**, in which the oxide layer separates from the binder, is endemic to acetate-based tapes manufactured in the late 1960s. Fortunately this is quite rare. Another problem associated with very early acetate tapes is **blocking**, in which the wind melts together as a result of exposure to excessive heat. If your tapes date from 1970 onward, they are unlikely to have flaking or blocking.

## REFORMATING AND REMASTERING

Once you've found an open-reel deck that works, the tape path must always be thoroughly clean.

This includes the entire drum surface, especially along the edges of the tape path groove, and behind the two guide posts beside the circular drum, where residues accumulate but are hard to see. The heads and tension bar must also be carefully cleaned. The tape path should be recleaned after each tape, whether or not there is any problem with playback.

If your primary objective is to have a viewable copy on a convenient format, with no intention of broadcasting or re-editing the material, then VHS (or S-VHS) is the cheapest format to transfer to that doesn't require a time base corrector (TBC). Consumer VHS is a very forgiving format, whereas the servo mechanisms of some industrial-grade three-quarter-inch recording decks have much more difficulty locking into the nonstandard signal. The playback will wobble or break up completely. Most three-quarter-inch systems—the early 1600 and 2000 models or the more recent 950—will be able to lock into the open-reel signal. Even if you just want to view the open-reel tape to see what you've got, it makes sense to transfer it to VHS (or another consumer format) at the same time. In general, if you are trying to transfer to another format without the aid of a TBC, you'll have better luck with a first-generation tape.

Bear in mind that some tapes that look great during playback on the open-reel deck or play back fine without time base correction may be highly problematic when you try to put them through certain TBCs. Also, there is no one approach to remastering that will work with all open-reel tapes. Prepare for the possibility that a small percentage of tapes or sections within a tape



People's Video Theatre (PVT) put video into the hands of the people—from the Black Panther Party to passersby on 14th Street (around the corner from their storefront screening room)—using the TBC-unfriendly CV format. The recently restored *Street Argument* (1970) is part of PVT's rich legacy of anti-establishment, street smart video, which also includes footage of the American Indian Movement Thanksgiving Day Takeover of Plymouth Rock, the first Gay Pride March in New York City, the first International Women's Day March on 5th Avenue, the Young Lords, street polls, and street theater.

Courtesy People's Video Theatre.




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will push your technological capacity, patience, and budget to the limit. Decisions will then have to be made about their importance. But generally, virtually anything that looks okay on playback can ultimately be remastered and reformed.

Most technical problems can be solved without too much pain by having the right hardware. If you are working with a late model open-reel deck with advanced sync output as well as a Baby "N" Connector (BNC) for radio frequency (RF) output, you're ahead of the game. The advanced sync output can plug into the TBC, allowing it to 'talk' to the servo mechanism of the open-reel deck and help correct the most serious time base errors. The RF output (not to be confused with the RF antenna connection) is intended to connect to the TBC's dropout compensator or to an early model stand-alone DOC, which in turn connects to the TBC. This will eliminate most of the visible dropout and fill in missing lines of information.

An old model stand-alone proc amp that processes the signal before reaching the TBC may be necessary for some tapes. The TBC should ideally have full window error correction, frame store capacity, internal burst generator, and an internal DOC. The quieter its signal-to-noise ratio the better. The burst generator is needed to make the black and white signal compatible with current video standards. Without it, you'll get a noticeable glitch when intercutting the old footage with color video.

Many modern TBCs have internal proc amp capacity, but it is often inadequate for "excessive levels" that might occur on old format tapes. For example, if there is a section that is extremely overexposed, most modern TBCs just can't han-

dle it. The old model proc amps will do a much better job at reducing or eliminating streaking, blooming, or picture breakup that results from gross distortions in the video signal. There are many early model proc amps that will do the job (e.g., the Grass Valley 900 series or the 3M D100), but the proc amp needs to have a "white clip" and "black clip" for pre-TBC video level corrections.

Many open-reel tapes will remaster fine going through TBCs with less error correction capacity, such as a TBC with 32-line error correction. An open-reel deck with advanced sync output is also not a necessity. But with some tapes, you may get a jittering or frame grabbing effect if the TBC is being pushed beyond its limits. Sometimes this can be eliminated by fine adjustments of the tracking, recleaning the tape path, or using a rubber band to remove the tension bar from the tape.

But when all you have is the direct video feed, and it seems to be a signal that your TBC doesn't like (this is especially true of all CV format tapes), it's best to transfer to another format first without any processing or time base correction—e.g. to BVU three-quarter-inch or Betacam (placing the external switch on nonstandard input and turning off the internal TBC; if the Betacam deck is for component video, input the Y component). Then TBC the new tape. This usually works well, because the TBC now has a "friendly" format to talk to via advanced sync. Very little signal quality is lost by going down a generation in this way. (While transferring CV tapes, you may see a black bar in the middle of the image, but it will not be disturbingly present upon playback.)





Regarding the earliest open-reel color formats, the AV5000 was a nonstandard color which cannot be time base corrected. To reformat, you may have to reshoot off the monitor. The AV8600 was a standardized color, but will require a TBC with a switch or input for heterodyne color.

It's ironic that the best system for the restoration of guerrilla TV and alternative video can be found in the utility rooms of America's largest and most powerful corporations, maintaining their essential financial data encoded on open-reel computer tapes. Probably because of this very upscale market, the machine is very pricey (over \$5,000) and thus is not an ideal solution for the do-it-yourself independent producer. However, independent producers needing restoration or preservation assistance can get information and referrals from Media Alliance in New York City. If you think that retrieving, restoring, and remastering the open-reel era is a daunting task, imagine what might await the output of today's estimated 14-million camcorders 20 years from now.

*David Shulman is producer of Everyone's Channel and Turn It On, Tune It In, Take It Over (with Eric Breitbart, Sally Berger, and Rody Bristow-Jones) on public access TV in the US and has recently established Backtime Video, an open-reel restoration service.*

**ATTENTION OPEN-REEL TAPE OWNERS:** Footage 93 is currently gathering information on open-reel tape collections. Send name, address, phone number, a short description of the tapes' content, format, condition, and number of reels to: Prelinger Associates, 430 W. 14 St., Rm 403, New York, NY 10014.

**Women take back the news in *An Alternative View of the 1972 Democratic Convention in Miami*, a newly restored videotape by the Women's Video News Service.** Eschewing the standard "news event" and the charismatic (usually white male) authority figure, WVNS constituted a feminist rebellion against the media's consuming hunger for masculinist reportage. The collective also served notice that women were equally capable of operating video equipment. Intended for public access channels on Manhattan cable TV, WVNS' work was part of a defining moment in the birth of electronic journalism.

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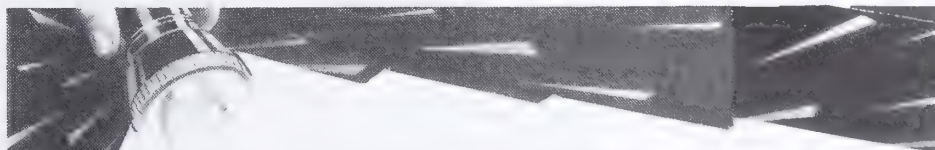
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## Domestic

**ASPEN SHORTSFEST**, Feb. 27-28, CO. Formerly part of fall's Aspen Filmfest, which presents new US independent films, int'l films, premieres & tributes, this competition is now on its own. 1 of 11 qualifying fests for Academy Award nomination, Aspen presents for works under 30 min.. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette. Deadline: Dec. 1. Contact: Ellen Kohner, director, Aspen Filmfest, Box 8910, Aspen, CO 81612; (303) 925-6882.

**BLACK MARIA FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL**, Jan., NJ. Established ind. producers & emerging artists welcome in competitive fest/traveling showcase, whose purpose is "to contribute to the dissemination & awareness of & access to new & uncommon work" for noncommercial media artists. All styles, lengths, genres accepted. Past fests included such topics as personal history, deconstruction of conventional notions of ethnic histories, role of news media in society, discrimination, sexism, sexual orientation prejudice, Native American rights, AIDS, education. Fest now entering 11th yr. No formal cats; entries may be doc, narrative, animation, experimental. Fest showcased in 45+ institutions coast to coast. \$15,000 in prizes/honoraria. Entry fee: \$25. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, super 8, 3/4", 1/2"; preview on cassette. Deadline: Nov. 15. Contact: John Columbus, Black Maria Film & Video Festival, Jersey City State College, Dept. of Media Arts, 203 West Side Ave., Jersey City, NJ 07305; (201) 200-2043.

**HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH FILM FESTIVAL**, May, NY. Only nat'l fest to focus on "the power of film to enhance public awareness of human rights issues & promote public education about specific human rights cases," event showcases over 25 fiction & doc films/videos & works-in-progress. Entries should address such issues as political prisoners, abuses of the person, freedom of expression, oppressed minorities & indigenous populations, racial & gender discrimination, refugees/immigration policy. All lengths accepted. Fest features panel discussions w/ filmmakers, human rights activists & experts from sponsoring Human Rights Watch. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4"; preview on cassette (cassettes will not be returned w/o SASE). Deadline: Dec. 15. Contact: Bruni Burres, programmer, Human Rights Watch Film Festival, 485 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10017-6104; (212) 972-8400; fax: (212) 972-0905.

**INPUT (INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC TELEVISION SCREENING CONFERENCE)**, May 24-30, MD. In 15th yr, INPUT gathers about 700 producers, programmers & broadcast executives from US, Canada, UK, Scandinavia, Latin America, Germany, Eastern Europe & USSR to view & discuss public TV programming. 100 programs selected by team of ind. producers & directors looking for innovative work. Entries must be produced & broadcast in 15 mos. prior; all genres accepted. Conference held alternately in Europe & N. America; last yr in Ireland, '93 in Bristol, England. This yr hosted by Maryland Public TV. No entry fee. Format: 3/4". Deadline: Nov. 1. Contact: Sandie Pedlow, US INPUT Secretariat, SCETV, 2627 Millwood Ave., Columbia, SC 29205; (803) 737-3208; fax: (803) 737-3417.

**MIAMI FILM FESTIVAL**, Feb. 7-16, FL. Under theme For the Love of Film & in 9th yr, noncompetitive fest exhibits int'l cinema, incl. features, docs, shorts, experimental & animated works. Entries should be completed in previous 4 yrs & not be in theatrical release. Program incl. tribute, galas, retros & workshops. Formats: 70mm,

**This month's festivals have been compiled by Kathryn Bowser, director of the FIVF Festival Bureau. Listings do not constitute an endorsement. Since some details change faster than we do, we recommend that you contact the festival for further information before sending prints or tapes. In order to improve our reliability and make this column more beneficial to independents, we encourage all film- and videomakers to contact FIVF Festival Bureau with their personal festival experiences, positive and negative.**

35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette. Deadline: Dec. 1. Contact: Miami Film Festival, 444 Brickell Ave., Suite 229, Miami, FL 33131; (305) 377-FILM.

**NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL**, May 20-25, CA. One of country's largest educational media fests. Accepts docs, dramatic features & shorts, animation, classroom, medical/health, training/instructional, special interest, made-for-TV, PSAs, film/video art, student-made docs & narratives, interactive media. Entries must be completed betw 1/1/90 & 12/2/91. Awards Gold, Silver, Bronze Apple in cats; \$1000 to student winners. Gold Apple winners qualify for Academy Award competition in doc & short subject cats. In 22nd yr, fest held in Oakland & San Francisco. Concurrent market showcases ind. productions for nontheatrical distrib.. Entry fee: \$80-\$150, depending on length; \$30 to \$40 student; \$125 interactive media. Formats: 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", filmstrip; preview on cassette. Deadline: Dec. 2 (late entries accepted until Dec. 16 w/ fee). Contact: National Educational Film & Video Festival, 655 13th St., Oakland, CA 94612; (415) 465-6885.

**POETRY FILM AND VIDEOPOEM FESTIVAL**, Dec. 7-8, CA. Now in 16th yr, competitive fest specializes in films & videos that "integrate poetry, film & music in a unified work of art" & "incorporate a verbal poetic statement in narrated or captioned form." This yr's theme: Work for Planetary Survival, but entries need not conform to theme. Max. length: 15 min. About 30 works selected for screenings. 4 awards & 4 honorable mentions given. Narrative, doc (involving poetry), video & animated works accepted. Entry fee: \$5. Deadline: Nov. 26. Contact: Herman Berlandt, Poetry Film & Videopoem Festival, Fort Mason Center, San Francisco, CA 94123; (415) 776-6602.

**SAN ANTONIO CINEFESTIVAL**, Jan. 31-Feb 2, Feb. 8-9, TX. Country's longest-running int'l Latino fest now in 16th yr. Showcases work produced by Latinos & about int'l Latino experience. Cats: fiction (short/feature/made for TV); doc (short/feature/made for TV); animation/experimental; 1st work; home video. Fest awards Premio Mesquite & honorable mentions in each cat. as

well as non-cat. Jury Award. Entries must be of direct relevance to Latino community. PSAs, industrials, promotional works not accepted. Entry fee: \$20. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 8mm, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Oct. 31. Contact: Yvette Nieves-Cruz/Cindy Rios, San Antonio CineFestival, Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center, 1300 Guadalupe St., San Antonio, TX 78207-5519; (512) 271-3151; fax: (512) 271-3480.

**SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL GOLDEN GATE AWARDS COMPETITION**, Apr. 23-May 7, CA. Presented by San Francisco Film Society, competitive section of 35th San Francisco Int'l Film Festival now in 30th yr. Annual audiences average 40,000. Last yr competition entries arrived from 34 countries. Awards of trophies & cash honoraria in 4 divisions: film/video (short narrative, artist profile, art work, animation, history, current events, sociology, environment); TV (feature, comedy, drama, fine arts/variety, arts/humanities, sociology, history, current affairs, environment); Bay Area film/video (shorts, doc); New Visions (experimental/personal/abstract). Main section curated & noncompetitive. Formats: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Dec. 6. Contact: Brian Gordon, San Francisco Film Society, 1560 Fillmore St., San Francisco, CA 94115-3516; (415) 567-4641; fax: (415) 921-5032.

**SANTA BARBARA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, Mar. 13-22, CA. Now in 7th yr, noncompetitive fest programs features & docs, workshops & special events. This yr features sections on Canadian & Native American cinema & evenings w/ major film luminaries. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4"; preview on 1/2". Deadline: Dec. 15. Contact: Diane Durst/Phyllis de Picciotto, Santa Barbara International Film Festival, 1216 State St., Suite 201, Santa Barbara, CA 93101; (805) 963-0023; fax: (805) 965-0557.

**SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL**, Jan. 16-26, UT. Sundance has become premiere US showcase for new ind. films; many important works have premiered & launched their theatrical life at competitive fest. Dramatic & doc films accepted. Entries must be at least 51 percent US financed (films produced, financed, or initiated by major film studios ineligible for competition, but films purchased after completion eligible). Work must be completed after Oct. 15, 1990. Entries may not open theatrically before Feb. 1, 1992 in more than 3 N. Amer. markets or be broadcast nationally & may not play in more than 2 domestic film fests prior to Sundance. Dramatic films must be at least 70 min. & docs at least 50 min. Shorts ineligible for competition, but may be submitted for fest screening. Awards: Grand Prize (jury ballot); Cinematography Award (jury ballot); Audience Award (popular ballot); Filmmakers' Trophy (filmmakers' vote). Films selected in drama cat. also compete for Screenwriters' Award (jury ballot). One rep from each competing film invited to attend as fest's guest. Fest attended by large number of distributors, programmers, journalists, critics & agents. Entry fee: \$35 (\$10 short). Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 3/4" or 1/2". Deadline: Nov. 1. Contact: Alberto Garcia, competition director; Geoffrey Gilmore, programming director; John Cooper, associate programmer, short films; Sundance Film Festival, Independent Film Competition, 3619 Motor Ave., Suite 240, Los Angeles, CA 90034; (213) 204-2091; fax: (213) 204-3901.

## Foreign

**BERLIN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, Feb. 13-24, Germany. One of world's top int'l fests, w/ 9,000



attending fest & European Film Market each yr. Now in 42nd yr, Berlin offers ind. film hospitable atmosphere. Fest, supported by all levels of German government, divided into 7 sections, each w/ own character & organization. Int'l Competition: by invitation, programmed by fest director Moritz de Hadeln, 35mm & 70mm features & shorts. Sections known for strong programming of US ind. films are: Int'l. Forum of New Cinema, headed by Ulrich Gregor & Panorama (noncompetitive section of official program) headed by Manfred Salzgeber. Both screen narrative, doc & experimental works. Forum specializes in avant-garde intellectual & political films (60 min. & up, 16mm & 35mm). Panorama presents wide range of work from low-budget to more commercial ventures incl. studio films (features & shorts under 15 min., 16mm, 35mm, 70mm). Other sections: Kinderfilmfest, 35mm & 16mm films over 59 min. produced for children; New German Films; Retrospective. The European Film Market: important meeting place for screenings & sales, w/ reps from over 40 countries. All entries must be produced in 12 mos. preceding fest & not released theatrically or on video in Germany. American Independents and Features Abroad (AIFA) market booth, organized by New York Foundation for the Arts w/ consortium of 35 ind. media orgs, is center of activity for US ind. filmmakers. AIFA distributes catalog & poster, arranges screenings, organizes press conferences & other functions. Along w/ films selected by fest, AIFA reps 20 theatrical features & docs w/ theatrical possibilities. For info on AIFA, contact: Lynda Hansen, NYFA, 5 Beekman St., New York, NY 10038; (212) 233-3900. Fest deadline: Nov. 30. Contact: Internationale Filmfestspiele Berlin, Budapest Strasse 50, D-1000 Berlin 30, Germany; tel: (030) 254890; fax: (030) 25489249.

**CINEMA DU REEL**, Mar. 7-15, France. Now in 14th yr, prestigious fest accepts 20-25 recent sociological & ethnographic docs in int'l competition. Awards: Prix Cinema du Reel (FF50,000); Prix du Court-Metragé (FF15,000), Prix Joris Ivens (FF15,000), Prix des Bibliothèques (FF30,000), Prix du Patrimoine (FF15,000), Prix Louis Marcorelles. Entries must be completed between Jan. 1 & Dec. 31, 1991. This yr special program on Latin American docs. Held at Georges Pompidou Centre. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, video 8, 3/4". Deadline: Nov. 1 (send preliminary info only, no cassettes; fest will contact entrants w/ appl. forms & viewing arrangements). Contact: Suzette Glenadel, General Delegate, Cinema du Reel, 19, rue Beaubourg, 75197 Paris Cedex 04, France; tel: 1 42 77 12 33; fax: 1 42 77 72 41.

**CLERMONT-FERRAND INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL**, Jan. 31-Feb. 8, France. Held in conjunction w/ 14th Nat'l Clermont-Ferrand Film Festival & 7th Short Film Market. 4th edition of competitive fest devoted to shorts. In 1991 30 countries represented by over 200 films, shown to more than 50,000 spectators. Fiction, animation, doc & experimental works accepted. Awards: Grand Prix, Special Jury Prize & Public Prize (each FF20,000 & Vercingetorix trophy). Entries must be completed after Jan. 1, 1990 & under 40 min. Industrial & commercial films ineligible. French subtitling strongly advised for promotion. Directors of selected films invited to fest for 3+ days w/ hotel, food allowance & FF400 travel. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Nov. 4. Contact: Festival International du Court Metrage de Clermont-Ferrand, 26, rue des Jacobins, 63000 Clermont-Ferrand, France; tel: 33 73 91 65 73; fax: 33 73 92 11 93.

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US preselection made at FIVF by fest US rep Berenice Reynaud. Films must be directed or codirected by women; completed since Mar. 1, 1990; not theatrically released in France, broadcast on French TV, or shown at other French fests. Student prods ineligible. All subjects, genres & styles considered. Fest pays for accommodations (3 days) for filmmakers & round-trip shipping for films selected through FIVF. Films need French translation, synopsis, publicity & bio materials. Format: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 3/4" & 1/2". Entry fee: \$25 AIVF members; \$30 nonmembers, payable to FIVF. Deadline: Dec. 1. For info or appl., send SASE or contact Kathryn Bowser, FIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th fl., NY, NY 10012; (212) 473-3400.

**FRAPNA FILM FESTIVAL ON NATURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT**, Feb. 26-Mar. 8, France. Organized by Federation Rhone Alpes de Protection de la Nature, biennial competitive fest, now in 9th yr, features ecological, nature & animal films. Entries must be completed after Jan. 1, 1989. Awards: First Prize (FF20,000); Best Film for Nature Protection (FF10,000); Best French Film (FF10,000). For invited directors, fest provides food & lodging & help w/travel expenses. No entry fee. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4" (PAL). Deadline: Dec. 1. Contact: FRAPNA, Maison de la nature, 5, Place Bir Hakeim, Grenoble, France; tel: 33 76 42 64 08; fax: 33 51 24 66.

**HENRI LANGLOIS INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF TOURS—CINEMA & TELEVISION**, Jan. 21-27. Open to TV & ind. films dealing w/"adventure of life through discoveries, experiences, missions, passions & positions of outstanding men & women, even children, working for a real humanism." Features, fiction shorts & current affairs (10-40 min.) & "great reports" (under 52 min.) accepted. Entries must be produced during 12 mo. preceding fest & presented for 1st time in competition. Awards by int'l jury: Great Etienne-Jules Marey Prize (best feature); Henri Langlois Prize de la Presse (best great report); Prize of Ville de Tours (best short, current affairs, or fiction); Public Prize. Selected directors invited for length of fest w/travel expenses (from Paris) & stay in Tours covered. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette (PAL). Deadline: Oct. 31. Contact: Lionel Tardif, general delegate, International Festival Henri Langlois de Tours-Cinema & Television, 7, rue des Tanneurs, 37000 Tours, France; tel: 33 47 39 04 97; fax: 33 47 38 61 87.

**MEDIEN OPERATIVE VIDEOFEST**, Feb. 13-24, Germany. Associated w/Berlin Film Fest & now in 5th yr, fest open to tapes of all genres & computer animation produced in 1990 or 1991 & unentered in prior VideoFests. Tapes should deal w/ political, social,

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When you join the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, you're doing something for yourself—and for others. Membership entitles you to a wide range of benefits. Plus, it connects you with a national network of independent producers. Adding your voice helps us all. The stronger AIVF is, the more we can act as advocate for the interests of independents like yourself—inside the corridors of Washington, with the press, and with others who affect our livelihoods.

## 8 Benefits of Membership

### THE INDEPENDENT

Membership provides you with a year's subscription to *The Independent*. Published 10 times a year, the magazine is a vital source of information about the independent media field. Each issue helps you get down to business with festival listings, funding deadlines, exhibition venues, and more. Plus, you'll find thought-provoking features, coverage of the field's news, and regular columns on business, technical, and legal matters.

### THE FESTIVAL BUREAU

AIVF maintains up-to-date information on over 650 national and international festivals, and can help you determine which are right for your film or video.

### Liaison Service

AIVF works directly with many foreign festivals, in some cases collecting and shipping tapes or prints overseas, in other cases serving as the U.S. host to visiting festival directors who come to review work.

### Tape Library

Members can house copies of their work in the AIVF tape library for screening by visiting festival programmers. Or make your own special screening arrangements with AIVF.

### INFORMATION SERVICES

#### Distribution

On person or over the phone, AIVF can provide information about distributors and the kinds of films, tapes, and markets in which they specialize.

### AIVF's Member Library

Our library houses information on distributors, funders, and exhibitors, as well as sample contracts, funding applications, budgets, and other matters.

### SEMINARS

Our seminars explore current business, aesthetic, legal, and technical topics, giving independent producers a valuable forum to discuss relevant issues.

### BOOKS AND TAPES

AIVF has the largest mail order catalog of media books and audiotaped seminars in the U.S. Our list covers all aspects of film and video production. And we're constantly updating our titles, so independents everywhere have access to the latest media information. We also publish a growing list of our own titles, covering festivals, distribution, and foreign and domestic production resource guides.

*continued*

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A production insurance plan, tailor-made for AIVF members and covering public liability, faulty film and tape, equipment, sets, scenery, props, and extra expense, is available, as well as an errors and omissions policy with unbeatable rates.

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AIVF currently offers two health insurance policies, so you're able to find the one that best suits your needs.

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Reduced rates for dental coverage are available to NYC and Boston-area members.

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In all stages of production and in most formats, AIVF members can take advantage of discounts on equipment rentals, processing, editing services, and other production necessities.

### *National Car Rental*

National offers a 10-20 percent discount to AIVF members. Write for the AIVF authorization number.

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Keep watching *The Independent* for information about additional benefits.

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cultural, or individual topics in critical way, display innovative aspects, or further formal language of video. Awards: DM1,000 each for 2 outstanding tapes & tape of emerging artist. Int'l institutions devoted to video production & propagation of video culture presented as part of info program. Fest also hosts int'l video market for distributors, producers, video artists. Medien-Operative organizes int'l tour of selected fest program w/ paid screenings. Selected tapes refunded \$25 for postage & packaging. Formats: 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Nov. 15. Contact: MedienOperative Berlin e.V., Potsdamer Str. 96, W-1000 Berlin 30, Germany; tel: (030) 262 8714; (030) 262-8713.

**MONTREAL INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF FILMS ON ART**, Mar., Canada. Competitive fest for prods related to arts, incl. painting, sculpture, architecture, design, crafts, museology, restoration, photography, fashion, interior decoration, literature, dance, music & theater. Fest not for experimental film/video but productions on art-related subjects. Features & shorts accepted. Sections: Creative Crossroads (in & out of competition film & video); Focus (Theme: style, period, trend; Tribute: noted artist or filmmaker; Event: anniversary or exhibition); Reflections (films & videos by artists); Artificial Paradise (film/video design); Time Remembered (retro of film/video on arts that are part of history of cinema). Entries in competition must be completed in previous 3 yrs; no date restrictions on other sections. Awards: Grand Prix, best director, best film for TV, best biography, best essay, best aid to creative achievement, Video Grand Prix. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Entry fee: \$25 film; \$15 video. Deadline: Nov 1. Contact: Rene Rozoni, Montreal International Festival of Films on Art, 445 St. Francois-Xavier St., Ste. 26, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2Y 2T1; tel: (514) 845-5233; fax: (514) 849-5929.

## AIVF REGIONAL CORRESPONDENTS

AIVF has a network of regional correspondents who can provide membership information, hold meetings, and aid recruitment in areas of the country outside New York City. AIVF members are urged to contact them about AIVF-related needs and problems, your activities, and other relevant information and news:

**Howard Aaron**, Northwest Film and Video Ctr., 1219 S.W. Park Ave., Portland, OR 97205; (503) 221-1156

**Cheryl Chisolm**, 2844 Engle Road, NW, Atlanta, GA 30318; (404) 792-2167

**Dee Davis**, Appalshop, 306 Whitesburg, KY 41858; (606) 633-0108

**Loni Ding**, 2335 Jones St., San Francisco, CA 94133; (415) 474-5132; 673-6428

**Dai Sil Kim-Gibson**, 1752 17th St., NW, Washington, DC 20009; (202) 232-6912

**Deanna Morse**, School of Communication, Grand Valley State Univ., Allendale, MI 49401; (616) 895-3101

**Lourdes Portillo**, 981 Esmeralda St., San Francisco, CA 94110; (415) 824-5850

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**MEDIA NETWORK** social issue media conference, Nov. 23-24, Hunter College, NYC. Panels, screenings & workshops on education, organizing, prod. & distrib. Focus on dominant & alternative media representations of "America" and American identity ref. to quinquennial. Contact: Kelly Anderson, Media Network, 39 W. 14th St., Suite 403, New York, NY 10011; (212) 929-2663.

## Films ■ Tapes Wanted

**ATA TRADING CORP.** ind. distributor, seeks docs, children's, music & special interest films for foreign & domestic sales. ATA Trading Corp., 50 W. 34th St., Suite 5C6, New York, NY 10001; (212) 594-6460.

**AXELGREASE**, 30-min. public access program sponsored by Squeaky Wheel, showcases videos & films by artists in Buffalo & around US. Experimental, animation, narrative, doc & computer imaging work under 27 min. on 1/2", 3/4", Beta, 8mm, or hi-8. Contact: Axelgrease, Squeaky Wheel, 372 Connecticut St., Buffalo, NY 14213; (716) 884-7172.

**COE FILM ASSOCIATES**, distributors of independently produced docs, dramas, & children's programs, wants new product for foreign & domestic TV markets. Send 1/2" & 3/4" tapes for screening. Contact: Beverly Freeman, CFA, 65 E. 96th St., New York, NY 10128; (212) 831-5355.

**DONNELL MEDIA CENTER** seeks proposals for silent video install. in library display window. NYSCA honorarium & partial expenses. Prior work welcome. Deadline 1/92. Contact M. Nesthus/D. Sarlin, Donnell Media Center, 20 W. 53rd St., NY, NY 10019.

**FANLIGHT PRODUCTIONS** seeks new films & videos on health care, mental health, sexuality, family life & social issues for educational distribution. Contact: Brenda Shanley, Fanlight Productions, 47 Halifax St., Boston, MA 02130, (617) 524-0980.

**FIFTEEN MINUTES:** Washington DC nightclub wants video & film for Wed. night screening & performance events. Fees to artists. Accepts 16mm, VHS, S-VHS & hi-8. Also looking for ambient video. Contact: Eric Gravelly, 15 Minutes, 1030 15th St., NW, Washington, DC 20005; (202) 667-5643.

**FORUM GALLERY**, Jamestown, NY, seeks humorous art for spring '92 multimedia exhibit, Wit & Wisdom. Deadline: Nov. 15. Catalog accompanies each exhibit. Send film, tape, support materials & SASE to: Michelle Henry, Forum Gallery, 525 Falconer St. Jamestown, NY 14701; (716) 665-9107.

**INDEPENDENT FOCUS**, WNET's series of US ind. work, seeks finished films & videos for 15th season. Narrative, doc, animation & experimental work 2 hrs & under accepted. Acquisition fees based on \$55/min. for 3 releases in 3 yrs. Series airs July-Oct in NY only. NY area broadcast premiere req. Deadline: Nov. 1. For entry form contact: Cara Mertes, WNET, 356 W. 58th St.,

**Notices are listed free of charge. AIVF members receive first priority; others are included as space permits. The Independent reserves the right to edit for length. Deadlines for Notices will be respected. These are the 8th of the month, two months prior to cover date (e.g., October 8 for the December issue). Send to: Independent Notices, FIVF, 625 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.**

New York, NY 10019; (212) 560-2917.

**LA PLAZA:** Weekly WGBH-Boston doc series acquires original works by ind. film & videomakers on social & cultural issues concerning Latinos. Send VHS or 3/4" tapes to: La Plaza/Acquisitions, WGBH, 125 Western Ave., Boston, MA 02134.

**LESBIAN & GAY COMMUNITY CENTER** seeks film & video in all genres by, about & of interest to lesbians for monthly NYC screening series. Send VHS preview tapes, description, bio & return postage to: Lesbian & Gay Community Services Center, Attn: Lesbian Movie Night Committee, 208 West 13th St., New York, NY 10011; (212) 620-7310.

**LONG SHOT THEATER:** nonprofit public access program seeks film & video under 25 min. in all genres for weekly 30-min. forum. No fees. Send 3/4" cassette & description to: Todd Sargent, Long Shot Theater, 48 Sawyer Ave., Boston, MA 02125; (617) 287-1980.

**PCTV** cable network seeks entries for *Global Africa*, Black history month int'l film/video series & festival. Entries meeting standards to be cablecast in San Francisco Bay Area & screened at Oakland Museum. Entry fee: \$20. Deadline: Nov. 15. Send 3/4" or VHS exhibition quality tapes & entry form to: Peralta Colleges Television Network, Global Africa, 900 Fallon Street, 9th fl., Oakland, CA 94604; (415) 464-3253.

**SENSORY LAB** seeks video art/imagery for alternative showcase in Los Angeles. Contact: Magdalena, Sensory Lab, 4470-107 Sunset Blvd., Box 420, Los Angeles, CA 90027; (213) 661-3903.

## Opportunities ■ Gigs

**FILM/VIDEO ARTS** internships. Minimum 6-mo. commitment, 15 hrs/wk work in exch. for free media classes, access to equip. & facilities. Minorities strongly encouraged. Appls received at all times. Contact: Angie Cohn, intern coordinator, F/VA, 817 Broadway, New York, NY 10003-4797; (212) 673-9361.

**INDEPENDENT FILM GROUP**, assoc. of NY independents, seeks script treatments in comedy/action/drama/

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**MEDIA ARTIST** sought by Univ. of Michigan for courses in film & video prod. as 3-yr lecturer starting Sept. 1992. Send letter & vita to: Ira Konigsberg, Program in Film & Video Studies, Univ. of Michigan, 2512 Frieze Bldg., Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1285.

**MEDIA NETWORK** seeks interns to help produce publications about independent film & video. Contact: David, Media Network, 39 W. 14th St., New York, NY; (212) 929-2663.

## Publications

**BAN CENSORSHIP:** People for the American Way's 30-postcard booklet w/ anti-censorship messages pre-addressed to policymakers, incl. legislators, TV execs, textbook companies. \$4.95 plus shipping & handling. Orders: (800) 365-3453.

## Resources ■ Funds

**ERIK BARNOUW AWARD** for outstanding doc, TV reporting, or programming on US history. Work must be released in 1991. \$500 & certificate awarded & winning piece screened at OAH annual meeting in Chicago, Apr. 2-5, 1992. Deadline: Dec. 1. Contact: Organization of American Historians, 112 North Bryan St., Bloomington, IN 47408; (812) 855-7311.

**FILM/VIDEO ARTS** offers financial assistance for film rentals & speaker fees to nonprofit community orgs in NYS. Priority given for ind. filmmakers &/or films not ordinarily avail. to the community. Deadline: Oct. 15. Contact: Film Bureau, F/VA, 817 Broadway, New York, NY 10003; (212) 673-9361.

**FRAMELINE** film/video completion fund awards up to \$5,000 to doc, dramatic, educational, animated, or experimental projects about/of interest to lesbians & gay men. Deadline: Oct. 15. Contact: Frameline, Box 14792, San Francisco, CA 94114; (415) 861-5245.

**NEW YORK FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS:** Artists' Fellowships in Film & Video. Deadline: Oct. 4. Contact: NYFA, 5 Beekman St., New York, NY 10038; (212) 233-3900.

**PAUL ROBESON FUND** for independent media awards preproduction & distribution grants to film & video artists addressing social issues. Women, gay men & lesbians, people of color, physically challenged & artists utilizing alternative forms of social issue doc encouraged. Deadline: Dec. 1. For guidelines & appl. write: Funding Exchange, 666 Broadway, #500, New York, NY 10012; (212) 529-5300.

**NATIVE VOICES** Public TV Workshop accepting proposals for 2 half-hr cultural affairs programs by & for Montana Native Americans. Contact: Daniel Hart, executive director, Native Voices Public Television Workshop, Dept. of Film & TV, Montana State University, Bozeman, MT 59717; (406) 994-6223.

**PCA ARTS IN EDUCATION PROGRAM** supports PA artist residencies w/schools & community orgs. Deadline for statewide artist roster: Nov. 1; for final appl. from host org.: Feb. 15. For guidelines & forms, request *Guide to the Arts in Education Program*: Diane Sidener Young, PA Council on the Arts, Rm 216 Finance Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120; (717) 787-6883.



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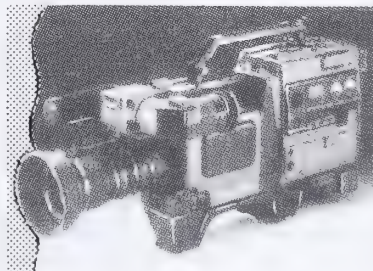
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## MINUTES FROM THE AIVF/ FIVF BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

The board of directors of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers and the Foundation for Independent Video and Film met in New York City on June 22, 1991. In attendance were: Dai Sil Kim-Gibson (chair), Robert Richter (president), Debra Zimmerman (treasurer), Dee Davis (secretary), Christine Choy, Jim Klein, Jack Walsh, Bart Weiss, and Martha Gever (ex-officio).

Executive director Martha Gever announced the appointment of Alice Ro as the new membership director. Ro will replace Mary Jane Skalski, who left AIVF to pursue other interests. Gever also described the public announcement and RFPs for the FIVF Donor Advised Fund. This year the Edelman Family Fund and the Beldon Fund will participate.

Gever reviewed the controversy over the national PBS broadcast of *Tongues Untied* on P.O.V. Following discussion of possible strategies to support the broadcast, the board decided to issue a press release to newspapers in cities where the local public TV station was taking such actions.

In the reports from AIVF staff, *Independent* editor Pat Thomson announced an increase in the cover price of the magazine, effective August, and plans to raise advertising rates in January 1992. Interviews for a new managing editor, who would begin work in August, were underway. Seminars/membership director Mary Jane Skalski reported that the renewal rate had increased to 69 percent. She also noted that the seminar program for 1990-91 netted more income than projected. Festival bureau/information services director Kathryn Bowser reviewed the advisability of a price increase for the festival guide. The board recommended more aggressive promotion of festival bureau services to festivals.

Committee reports followed, with Advocacy Committee member Gever recapping AIVF's advocacy of behalf of NYSCA, as well as the FIVF seminar featuring Donald Marbury of the CPB Program Fund.

Membership Committee members Weiss, Walsh, and Skalski reviewed the question of charging fees for services to nonmembers, the possibility of an AIVF 900 number and an electronic bulletin board, and the use of college radio stations for the broadcast of taped AIVF/FIVF seminars. Cosponsorship of seminars and workshops with media organizations outside New York City was again endorsed and plans made for a meeting with producers from the Northwest during the NAMAC conference in July.

Zimmerman explained the Independent Media Distributors Alliance's (IMDA) challenge to PBS regarding their home video distribution policies and the use of 800 numbers. The board unanimously endorsed the following resolution in support of IMDA's objectives:

Resolution: Whereas the existence of a stable and diverse

field of independent distributors is essential to provide the specialized distribution efforts required by many independent productions;

Whereas a nontheatrical distribution industry monopolized by one or a few companies will do serious injury to the interests of producers, educators, and the general public;

Whereas PBS is about to become the country's largest financier of noncommercial and educational productions;

Whereas PBS is using its privileged position as the nation's only public broadcasting system to gain control over the commercial video distribution of the programs it broadcasts;

Whereas PBS' on-air offer restrictions coerce producers either to sign with PBS Video or a station, or forego use of an 800 toll free number;

And whereas PBS' increasing reliance on commercial business ventures such as institutional and home video sales diverts PBS from its noncommercial, public broadcasting mission;

Therefore be it resolved that AIVF shall request that PBS permit on-air notices for all its broadcasts (including addresses and phone numbers—toll free or not—of program distributors, publishers of study guides, and other ancillary materials);

Be it further resolved that AIVF shall request from PBS that it not entail from producers ancillary distribution and/or syndication rights as a condition—explicit or implied—for broadcast, financing, or co-productions.

And be it further resolved that AIVF shall work with independent film and video distributors and others to achieve the above objectives.

Finally, a board retreat was scheduled for Saturday, September 14, with committee meetings held the preceding evening. AIVF members are encouraged to attend committee meetings. Call AIVF to confirm date, time, and location.

## WELCOME ABOARD

Welcome to newly elected AIVF board members Charles Burnett and James Schamus. Burnett's films include *To Sleep with Anger*, *Killer of Sheep*, and the upcoming *America Becoming*. Schamus served as executive producer on Todd Haynes' *Poison*, coproducer on Jan Oxenberg's *Thank You and Good Night*; and producer on Raul Ruiz's *The Golden Boat*. He also edits *The Off-Hollywood Report* and teaches film theory at Columbia University.

Reelected to the board were Dee Davis, Loni Ding, Bart Weiss, and Debra Zimmerman. Christine Choy, Dai Sil Kim-Gibson, Jim Klein, Lourdes Portillo, and Robert Richter will continue to serve their two-year terms on the board.

## UPCOMING FIVF SEMINARS

### DISTRIBUTING YOUR FEATURE FILM

Monday, September 30, 7 p.m.  
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Special \$15 price (25% discount) on *The AIVF Guide to Film and Video Distributors*. How do you insure that your film reaches the widest possible audience? A panel of distributors and filmmakers will discuss issues to consider as you choose a distributor or decide to self-distribute. Panelists include Nancy Gerstman of Zeitgeist Films, and Julia Reichert, filmmaker and New Day Films member. Other panelists to be announced.

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## MEMBERABILIA

Congratulations to Northern California AIVF members who received **Film Arts Foundation** grants: Craig Baldwin, Jan Krawitz, Carla Leshne, Andy Moore, Chris Robbins, Ellen Bruno, and Leslie Asako Gladsjo. Kudos to Jill Petzall, whose *S.O.S.: Stories of Survival* received a **CPB Silver Award** for Cultural-Documentary programming, an Award for Excellence at the **Sinking Creek Film Festival**, and a Silver Award at the **Houston International Film and Video Festival**. AIVF member Fritz Feick received a Gold Award at Houston as well as honorable mentions at both the **Sacramento Film Festival** and the **Hiroshima Film Festival** for his classical music video *Bulgare*. Mimi Pickering's *Chemical Valley* was awarded Best Short Video and Best Documentary at the **Utah Short Film and Video Festival**, and Steven Condiotti's *Why Don't You Dance?* and Andrew Garrison's *Fat Monroe* shared the Best Narrative Film award. Su Friedrich's *Sink or Swim* received the **Melbourne Film Festival's** Grand Prix as well as a Golden Gate Award at the **San Francisco Film Festival**. Congratulations.



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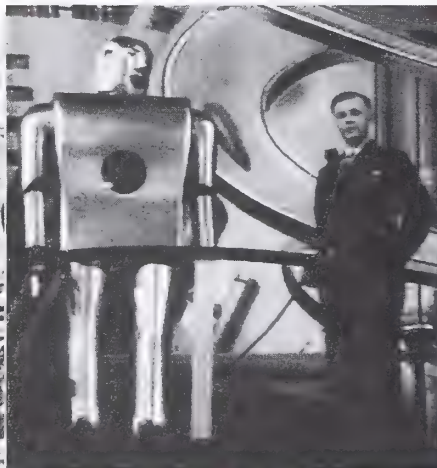
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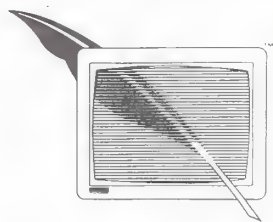
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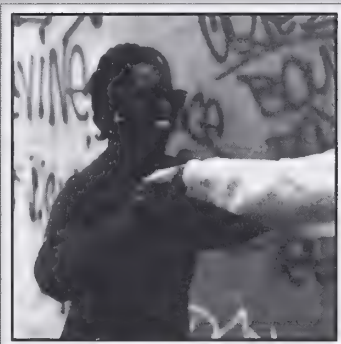
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**COVER:** Germany's iconoclastic directors are scrutinizing their history and heroes in films like Eduard Schreiber's *I Was a Happy Man*, one of many new documentaries examined in Karen Rosenberg's review of Deutschland cinema. Also in this issue, Claire Andrade-Watkins' review of FESPACO explores the problems and progress of African women directors. Photo courtesy filmmaker.

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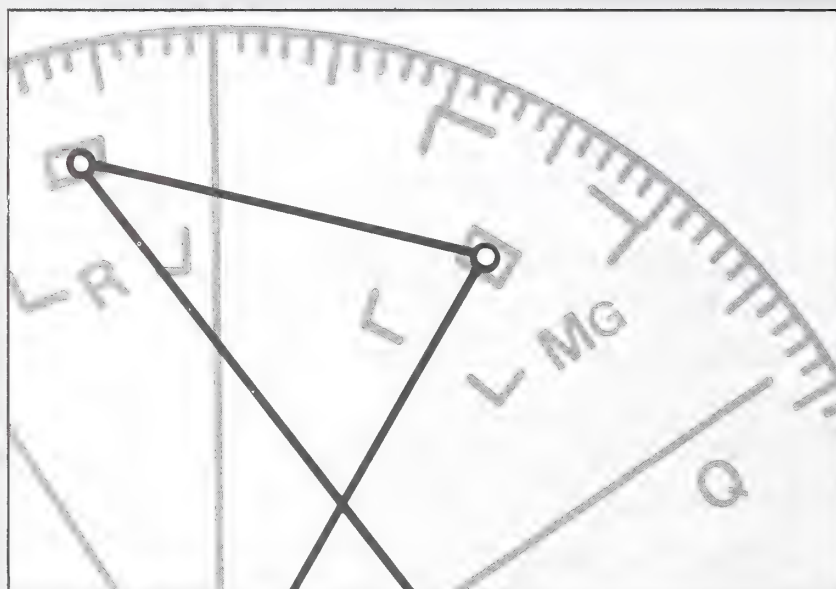
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## HI-8 DEBATE

To the editor:

In the letters column of your August/September issue, Ed Robbins writes, "There is no way to encode the Y/C signal directly to Betacam right now." This is not the case. Great hi-8 to Betacam SP dubs can be made using a transcoding TBC. For example, the HR600 from Prime Image has the ability to take the hi-8 Y/C signal and output Y/R-Y/B-Y to Betacam SP. For more information, contact a dubbing house that *knows* about hi-8. (For example, Dub Express here in San Francisco does excellent hi-8 to Betacam SP dubs using a transcoding TBC.) Don't settle for anything less for your hi-8 work; other ways of dubbing rob hi-8 of its potential quality as an acquisition format.

—David Tames  
San Francisco, CA

## PUTTING THE "P" WORD IN PERSPECTIVE

To the editor:

It was no surprise to read about an arts administrator beating cheeks for the emergency exit because the "P" word got mentioned ["Palestinian Conflict at the ICA," August/September 1991]. To a non-Palestinian who has for the last 10 years had an active interest in the human and political realities confronting Palestinian people, Nan Levinson's article seems more like a recognition of the rule than a flash on the exception. Works on this topic are invariably tarred as "unbalanced" or "bad journalism." Art venues transform overnight into centers of journalistic critique when the "P" word comes to town. And panel discussions where "experts balance the perspective" are standard operating procedure (translate that as someone with Zionist credentials calling the artist a liar or a victim of hallucinations).

In that context curator Elia Suleiman's conjecture—"If these films had been *about* Palestinians instead of *by* them, it would have been okay [for the ICA to exhibit]"—is historically inaccurate. The public pillory of Jo Franklin Trout for producing (by any means necessary) *Days of Rage* is a powerful example of how non-Palestinians ranging from artists to academics to politicians have fared when they did work about Palestinians. Vanessa Redgrave can't even read Pooh stories in Boston due to her public support for Palestinian human and political rights.

A good reference: Paul Findley's *They Dare to Speak Out* (Lawrence Hill Books, ISBN 1-55652-073-5). He was in Congress. Now he isn't. There was a show at ICA Boston. Then there wasn't. These are beads on a string.

—Tom Hayes  
Columbus, OH



## BRAVO BRAVO

### Independents Debut on *Community Cinema* Pilot



If Bravo's pilot program performs well, independents may find a new cable outlet in local markets alongside such hit features as Jane Campion's *Sweetie*.

Courtesy Avenue Entertainment

Two of the biggest problems encountered by independent filmmakers—finding a distributor and reaching a large audience—are about to be addressed by a new series on the Bravo cable network which will feature independent work. *The Independents*—not to be confused with the Learning Channel's long-running series of the same name—began airing in September and will appear every Monday at 8 p.m. The show will feature high-profile foreign and US independent productions, such as Jane Campion's *Sweetie* and Gus Van Sant's *Drugstore Cowboy*, but there's a twist. Bravo plans to permit cable operators to preempt the national feed in order to show works by local film and video artists on the second Monday of each month.

Bravo's *Community Cinema*, as this program-within-a-program is called, aired a pilot in Los Angeles last month. If the program goes national it will offer independents an opportunity to be reviewed by local media as well as to reach a large audience. "Unless distributors have some idea of how a film will be received publicly, they usually won't touch it," asserts vicepresident of programming Jonathan Sehring, who believes *Community Cinema* will help independents overcome distributors' reluctance to pick up new films.

Bravo president Josh Sapan developed the concept of *Community Cinema* in the interest of localizing programming. Bravo will play an active role in its promotion by sending press releases

and samples of work to be aired on *Community Cinema* to local media. Program announcements and solicitations will be sent to film schools, filmmakers' cooperatives, and other media organizations.

There will be no fee for entering a piece for consideration, nor will there be any remuneration for the filmmakers whose work is selected. Each year the network will award one \$5,000 prize and a slot on the national program to the film or video it considers the best of the local offerings. Although the national show is concentrating on showcasing feature-length films, Sehring maintains that all types of film and video, from documentaries to experimental shorts, will be considered for *Community Cinema*.

Bravo began an October test market for *Community Cinema* in the Los Angeles area on Century Cable to determine whether to go ahead with the program on a national scale. Although details about the program's future remain sketchy at press time, its start-up across the country and potential success will depend largely on the level

of response from the independent community and cable operators. Bravo is currently contracting with local operators in the hope that a significant number will participate. Filmmakers should contact operators in their area who carry Bravo to inform them of their interest. If there isn't a system in your area carrying the program, contact Bravo directly for information on the nearest participating operator. For more details, contact: Bravo's Community Affairs Department, 150 Crossways Park West, Woodbury, NY 11797; (516) 364-2222.

TOD LIPPY

*Tod Lippy is a filmmaker and writer living in New York City.*

## DREAMWORLDS AND NIGHTMARES FROM MTV

*Dreamworlds: Desire/Sex/Power in Rock Video*, a 55-minute video collage of 165 clips from Music Television (MTV), has garnered a lot of critical attention from feminists, the *New York Times*, and, most pointedly, from the legal department of MTV. Sut Jhally, an associate professor of communications at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, produced his critique of commercialized sex for distribution to high school and college classrooms in order "to get young people for whom these images are natural to think about them in a new way." But the tape is also raising questions for video- and filmmakers about their

Bravo will permit cable operators to preempt the national feed to show works by local film and video artists.



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right to use popular imagery in order to critique it in noncommercial productions.

On March 25, 1991, MTV issued a "cease and desist" letter to Jhally demanding that he "destroy all tapes, advertising and other matter in [his] possession which contain [MTV] trademarks and/or [MTV Network's programming]." Despite the threat of legal action for trademark and copyright infringement, Jhally defied the order, choosing instead to publicize MTV's attack and the issues. Jhally believes his tape is protected by the "fair use" clause of the 1976 Copyrights Act, which allows under certain circumstances the reproduction of excerpted material without prior permission. At present, there is scant case law on the books regarding fair use and film and video footage so if the dispute goes to court it could set a significant precedent.

In order for a work to be covered by the fair use clause, it must satisfy four terms either in part or combination. The work making use of copyrighted material must be of a noncommercial or educational nature. Only a limited amount of quoted material may be used (though no percentage is specified 500 words is standard in the case of a text). Quoted material must be of a public versus a private nature—for example, unpublished letters would be less likely to be covered than something meant for public consumption, such as a book. Finally, use of the quoted material should not affect the market value of the original work.

If MTV were to win a suit, "It would be chilling," says Jhally. "It would mean you can't comment on popular culture, because you can't comment on something you can't show. It would be like analyzing *Hamlet* without being able to use lines." On the other hand, a court decision in favor of Jhally would set a publicized precedent extending fair use provisions in the realm of film and video.

Copyright is not the only source of criticism regarding *Dreamworlds*. In his June 2, 1991 *New York Times* article, music critic Jon Pareles cites an uncomfortable similarity between Jhally's tactics and those of right-wing anti-pornography censors. Both Jhally and the Parents' Musical Resource Center, which pressured recording companies into placing warning labels on albums, take video segments out of context and edit them with suggestive voiceovers to make their points.

In *Dreamworlds*, images of Madonna and others flash on the screen, as Jhally explains in a hypnotic monotone that the women in rock videos "present themselves as legitimate objects of desire," "sex is their major concern." The incantatory, nonsynchronous narrative, which replaces the videos' original soundtracks, is in intended to disrupt teenagers' passive viewing of the clips and force a new recognition of the rock video message. But the method is drawing fire from some feminists. "I endorse his strategy in part," says Jennifer Terry, a fellow at Brown University's Pembroke Center, "but the problem is that in the process he imposes his own rather narrow sense of

the possibilities for female sexuality in the world of rock videos." In an unpublished letter to the *New York Times* written in response to Pareles' article, Terry and Jacqueline Urla, assistant professor of anthropology at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, write, "What starts out as an effort to tell men that women are more than play things or whipping posts turns into a finger-pointing frenzy where women who express any form of sexuality are merely a figment of men's sexist imaginations..."

MTV representatives had not seen the video when Nancy Altman, director of legal and contract administration, issued the letter to Jhally, but only the brochure which mentions MTV and replicates its trademark. "We wrote to him because he used the trademark to sell the tapes without our permission," contends Carol Robinson, MTV's director of publicity. Robinson refused to divulge any information about whether there are or have been any similar cases or threats made against other productions.

According to Robinson MTV is "reviewing [Jhally's] materials to see if we will take legal action," but Jhally believes MTV may be shying away from the public battle over free speech that a lawsuit would entail. Publicly, MTV asserts that they are interested only in the matter of trademark violation, although in their initial letter to Jhally they also cited his use of music videos as a copyright violation and potential source of litigation. In fact, MTV doesn't own the copyright to the videos, which are the property of individual record companies, none of which thus far has pursued any action regarding *Dreamworlds*.

Jhally insists that the tape has been singled out because its brochure criticizes MTV and rock video in general. In October 1990 Jhally distributed 3,000 brochures to a communications association mailing list that targeted educators, offering the controversial tape for \$100 to institutions and \$50 to individuals. One hundred and fifty copies had sold when this article went to press, with all proceeds going to a nonprofit corporation, the Foundation for Media Education and Research, for the purchase of additional equipment for the department of communications at Amherst.

Jhally says MTV's threat and possible suit "raise enormously important questions about who has the power to speak in image-based societies." The conflict has already provided some disconcerting answers. Jhally's new book, based on *Dreamworlds* and bearing the same name, was turned down by his publisher, Routledge, because potential court costs and staff time would have overtaxed the resources of the small publishing house, according to editorial director William Germano. The small, nonprofit University of Massachusetts press has since agreed to publish it.

CATHERINE SAALFIELD

Catherine Saalfeld is a freelance writer and videomaker in New York City.





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Professor Sut Jhally's critique of sexism in rock videos is causing headaches at MTV.

Courtesy Music Television

## CURTAINS FOR CANADIAN FILM FUND

Of the \$1.5-billion the Canadian government puts into culture each year, about \$200-million goes to film, video, and television. Of this approximately \$100-million goes for Telefilm, the lifeblood of Canada's commercial film industry, \$80-million to the National Film Board for "socially relevant" films, and \$4-million to the Canada Council for artists' films. The remaining \$16-million goes to smaller programs, one of the smallest being the Non-Theatrical Film Production Fund—that is, until this spring when the fund was sacrificed in the name of fiscal restraint.

The Non-Theatrical Film Production Fund was the only federal fund in Canada specifically designed to aid the production of independent film and video not intended for TV or theatrical release and the only federal film fund with specific regional allocations. One-quarter went to Quebec, one-quarter to Ontario, one-quarter to Atlantic Canada, and the last was shared by Western and Northern Canada.

The relatively small fund (its annual budget was \$2-million) was the only federal film program that allowed the country's 50 or so independent film and video cooperatives to act as executive producers on projects. Ordinarily federal award monies go only to commercial or well-established producers. The fund made low-budget, less commercial film- and videomakers eligible for the funding and eased the stranglehold of commercial producers on government film money.

The program supported mostly educational and special-interest work for schools, libraries, and specialty video sales. Most of the funding went to intriguing, challenging work from the independent community, including a drama on AIDS, a portrait of killer whales, and personal histories of discrimination. The program took risks, and those risks paid off. In the first two years, about one-

quarter of the works backed by the fund won awards at film festivals, including the Toronto Festival of Festivals, the Yorkton Short Film and Video Festival, and festivals in Europe.

Then on April 5, half-way through the government's five-year commitment to the program, the tide shifted. Paul Racine, an assistant deputy minister in the Department of Communications (the department responsible for federal cultural funding) declared, "The elimination of the Non-Theatrical fund has not been officially announced, but the decision has been taken nonetheless." Current contracts were to be honored, but the 60 applicants whose applications were pending were out of luck.

This was not an isolated act. Under the Conservatives, restraint has become the watchword of the Canadian federal government. The federal deficit—running at about \$30-billion per year—is larger per capita than that of the US, and programs in every sector are being slashed in an effort to bring it down. The Canada Council hasn't had an increase in four years. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Canada's national television broadcaster, has sustained cuts for the last three years. In 1990 the National Film Board carved out \$500,000 from the Non-Theatrical's \$2-million budget for an Imax extravaganza, and the following January an additional \$200,000 was taken from the program for Canada's war effort in the Gulf.

The decision to eliminate the fund touched off an unusual lobbying effort in Canada's media art world. Within two months, a national coalition had formed of more than 80 production companies, individuals, and organizations. More than 120 letters were received by the Department of Communications protesting the cuts, and in a very unusual move, two provincial ministers responsible for culture called for the fund's restoration. Protests were heard from every single province and territory, a rare occurrence given the current

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political divisions in Canada. Lobbying came from Eastern and Western Canada, from the central and regional parts, and, most surprisingly, from both English and French-speaking Canada. The response was nowhere near deafening, but it was persistent.

By July the government was looking for a solution. The Non-Theatrical Fund had an advisory committee, so the government turned to that body to negotiate a replacement for the fund. Agreement in principle was reached with committee members to set up a private, nonprofit foundation to fund nontheatrical film and video productions. The money would come from the budgets of Telefilm and the National Film Board, though the two programs would not interfere with the foundation. Regional allocations would continue and the same types of films and videos would be eligible.

As this article goes to press, Canadians are still hearing—as they have since July—that there will be an announcement regarding the new fund “in a week or two,” but nothing is official yet. The budget will likely be less than \$2-million a year, but it is not clear how much less. It is also likely that the staff will be different and its office will move, but it’s unclear how these changes will affect the program. In short, the foundation’s program will function but not look like the old Non-Theatrical Fund, in order to protect the federal government from the appearance of giving in to pressure from a special interest group and backing down on restraint.

M.B. DUGGAN

*M.B. Duggan is a filmmaker and executive director of the Winnipeg Film Group. The views expressed in this article are his own and do not represent those of any organization with which he is associated.*

## PHILADELPHIA PHILANTHROPY

If you’ve been contemplating a move to Philadelphia, a recent development there in arts funding might just convince you to pack your bags and go. The Pew Charitable Trusts, a Philadelphia-based philanthropic organization, has announced a three-year pilot program to give individual grants of \$50,000 to Philadelphia-area artists working in a variety of disciplines, including film and video. The pilot program, called the Pew Fellowships in the Arts, represents the country’s largest arts fellowship for which an individual can apply.

Each year, 16 fellowships will be made available for artists working in four of 12 disciplines: media arts (film and video), painting, sculpture, works on paper, craft arts, design, musical composition, choreography, playwriting, poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction writing, and performance. The film and video grants will be among those given in 1993, the last year of the program.

The program was established this June with a \$3.75-million grant from the Trusts and is the first

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instance of the Trusts' money being provided directly to individual artists. Recipients will be selected according to two major criteria: the applicant's accomplishments and promise in his or her discipline and the degree to which the fellowship will address a critical juncture in the artist's career and artistic development. After professional peer panels judge the sample works submitted in their respective disciplines, an interdisciplinary panel will review the artists' written statements, awarding grants to those individuals who seem to best meet the "critical juncture" criterion.

The Pew Charitable Trusts fund a wide range of nonprofit activities and institutions. They have also supported a large number of cultural institutions, from Philadelphia's public television station to museums around the country.

Even though film and video applications will not be considered until the fall of 1993, it is worth noting that to qualify for a grant, the applicant has to have lived in the five-county Philadelphia area for a least two years. Don't despair if you're *not* planning on moving to Philadelphia in the next month or so—the three-year project is being considered as a possible model for a national arts fellowship program, whose establishment will be contingent upon the pilot program's success.

For more information, contact: Ella King Torrey, Pew Fellowships in the Arts, the Pew Charitable Trusts, Suite 501, Three Parkway, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19102-1305; (215) 875-2285.

TL

## COMPLETION CACHE

Many independent filmmakers start projects with such limited capital that by the time they've scraped enough money together for the principal photography and other production costs, they find themselves tapped out just as the film is about to be completed. That's when the search for post-production funds gets earnest and anxious. Relief may be on the way since a new equity fund has been started to give projects that last infusion of cash for completion and distribution.

The New York Completion Fund was founded earlier this year to provide postproduction monies for independent filmmaking. Brainchild of independent producers' representative John Pierson, Island World's international film financier John Heyman, and record entrepreneur Chris Blackwell, the \$5-million fund will provide equity investments from \$5,000 to \$500,000 in feature films that have completed their principal photography. Pierson, who has represented such independent hits as *Roger and Me* and *She's Gotta Have It*, will also represent films selected by the fund.

Pierson says that he will "look at projects that are still on their way to completion, those with a strong script and at least half of the photography done." Scripts alone will not be considered. He is on the lookout for dramatic features but will

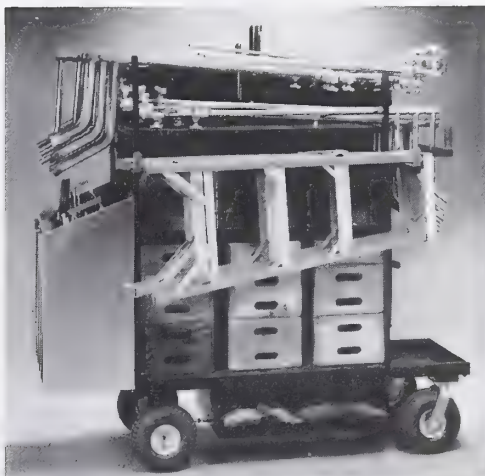
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consider commercially viable documentaries as well. Foreign films, as long as they are English-language, will also be eligible, though Pierson doubts that he will get many requests from abroad. "I think it's only in America that people launch films without having all the production funds together. Only Americans have those complete gambler instincts," he says.

"The great thing," Pierson told the *Village Voice*, "is that the money can come through fast. It's not like applying for a grant and waiting a year to find out if you've got it. We hope that the fact that we're here encourages filmmakers to jump off the cliff even if they don't have all their financing together up front."

Pierson feels strongly that the most innovative filmmaking happens outside Hollywood, and that New York City remains a mecca for some of the more impressive film concepts. That and the fact that most of the major film laboratories are located in New York informed the decision to christen the project the New York Completion Fund.

Call it enlightened capitalism, there's more than an interest in the arts behind the fund's establishment. It's business. The New York Completion Fund is "not a grant or prize, it is an *equity investment fund*," says Pierson, and Islet (the fund's corporate title) anticipates eventual profits on its investments. The fund's interest in a film will be proportionate to its investment in the total budget (e.g., a loan constituting 10 percent of a film's budget would entitle the fund to 10 percent of the profits).

To apply to the New York Completion Fund, independents should send half-inch cassettes of their feature film with a self-addressed stamped envelope to: New York Completion Fund, 153 Waverly Place, 12th fl., New York, NY 10014; (212) 620-9035.

PATRICIA SPEARS JONES

*Patricia Spears Jones is an African American poet, arts writer, and dedicated cineast.*

## TOM SMITH: 1956-1991

Tom Smith, assistant director of the media arts department of the American Federation of Arts (AFA), died on April 15 at Cabrini Hospital in New York of lymphoma. He was 34 years old.

He joined AFA in 1983 as coordinator of touring film exhibitions and was named assistant director of media arts in 1986. Among the many traveling exhibitions he helped organize were *Before Hollywood*, *New Video: Japan* and last year's *Moving Pictures: Films by Photographers*, which he also curated. At the time of his death, Smith had just completed work on *The Films of Yoko Ono*, which began its US and European tour this spring. Smith also attended festivals and markets around the world on behalf of the AFA to secure distribution agreements for independent avant-garde and documentary work.

In addition to his position at the AFA, Smith was film curator for the Institute for Art and Urban



Resources from 1985 to 1988, programming screenings of independent films at P.S. 1 in Queens and the Clocktower Gallery in New York City.

Smith attended the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications and New York University's Graduate School of Film and TV. His 1980 documentary *Paradise* won prizes at the Chicago International Film Festival and the Sinking Creek Festival.

## BURLEIGH WARTES: 1932-1991

Burleigh Wartes, an internationally renowned cinematographer for many independent producers, died of cancer on June 18 at his home in Norwalk, Connecticut. His most recent work was the highly praised independent documentary *Superstar: The Life and Times of Andy Warhol*, directed by Chuck Workman.

Wartes filmed in over 40 countries around the world, shooting documentaries, features, industrials, and commercials. He was the cinematographer for hundreds of award-winning independent productions, including *Who Shot President Kennedy?*, *Gods of Metal*, and *Vietnam: An American Journey*, by Robert Richter; *Style Wars*, by Tony Silver; *Senator Sam*, by David Royle; and *The Money and Hurry Up or I'll Be 30*, by Chuck Workman. These productions have won numerous major honors, including national Emmies and Academy Awards, and have been shown throughout the world.

His photography in the Imax large screen films *Living Planet* and *To Fly* has been seen by millions in extended exhibitions at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C., the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, and other museums.

Burleigh was noted for his intensity and sensitivity with regard to the people and subject matter he photographed. "Most of the films that I produced in the past two decades have been done with the wonderfully sensitive help of Burly," says Richter. "He was a highly intelligent photographer who sought meaning in every scene he filmed. Those who worked with him know he brought a special sense of morality to his craft. He could have had a more glamorous career in high-budget features, but often chose to focus on less lucrative but socially important documentaries."

## SEQUELS

After a six-year battle in Congress, the Visual Rights Act of 1990 passed, bringing the US on par with the over 70 countries that protect artists' moral rights ["Sequels," August/September 1990, "To Color or Not to Color," July 1989, and "The Limits of Copyright," May 1988]. The legislation amends copyright law to create a uniform national standard that will protect artists' authorship and prevent destruction, distortion, mutilation, or modification of visual art work. The statute specifically states that it does not cover film or video.

Despite efforts to save the venerable Bleeker Street Cinema ["First Exposure and Cinema Village in New York City," July 1991], New York's double-screen art house closed September 2 due to financial difficulties. The Cineplex Odeon-owned Biograph Theater, the largest commercial revival house in the city, also closed in September, the latest in a series of *art cinema closings*.

The *Ohio Independent Producers Screening*, at which program directors from the state's eight public television stations can view and acquire work by Ohio independents, is still going strong ["Ohio Independents Reap Benefits of State Program Fair," March 1990]. Fifty programs were entered and screened at this year's third annual program fair in late April. After four rounds of decision-making, one or more stations chose the following programs for broadcast: *The Projectionist*, by Sherwood Jones; *Cycles*, by Zeinab irene Davis; *Moon*, by Susan Halpern; *Kit's Jam*, by Peter Allison; *Affirmative Action*, by Jeff Wray; *Le Nozze*, by Paul Wagner; *Variations on What I Did Yesterday*, by John Mays; and *From the Shadows of Power*, by Jean Donohue. Because of the screenings' success, future events may be expanded to include a Program Proposal Fair to evaluate independent program treatments.

**Lawrence Sapadin**, former executive director of AIVF and former vice president of acquisitions at Fox Lorber Associates, assumed the position of managing director of PBS' *P.O.V.* series on October 1. **Donald E. Ledwig**, president and chief executive officer of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting since 1987, will not be renewing his term at CPB which expires January 1992. **Bienvenida Matias**, formerly with New York's WNYC-TV, is now senior staff producer at the Independent Television Service. **Cynthia Salzman Mondell**, a Dallas filmmaker, was elected president of New Day Films, a national cooperative devoted to the distribution of independent productions concerned with social change. **Tony Lewis** has been named executive director of the National Federation of Local Cable Programmers. **Susan Wyatt**, executive director of New York's Artists Space for the last six years, resigned from the organization on July 31. **Celeste Dado**, currently Artists Space's associate director, has been appointed acting executive director in Wyatt's place. The Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston has announced the departure of its curator of Media and Performing Arts, **Kathy Rae Huffman**, who will be relocating to Europe to work as a freelance curator and European contributing editor to *Visions* magazine. **Marlina Gonzalez-Tamrong**, former exhibitions director with Asian CineVision in New York, has joined the Walker Art Center's staff in Minneapolis as curatorial associate in the film/video department.



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# NO SILVER LINING

## States Announce Declining Arts Budgets

JON BURRIS

"When I first saw the letter, I thought it was a typo," remarked Lori Zippay, director of Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI), a Manhattan-based nonprofit video distributor. The letter stated that EAI's grant from the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) for general operating support—the money that keeps the doors open—had been cut by 40 percent to \$16,300 from last year's \$40,500. (A restoration was later made, bringing the amount to \$26,300.)

heavy staff layoffs and vastly reduced travel funds for visits to funded organizations.

New York is by far the hardest hit, both because NYSCA has suffered, in actual dollars, the largest single cut in the nation, and because the council's generous past policies have produced an infrastructure heavily reliant upon its support. NYSCA's grants budget was slashed 44 percent, from \$50.3-million in FY91 to \$28.2-million this year, with proportional cuts in media funding administered by the Electronic Media and Film (EMF) Program and the Individual Artists Program (IAP). Most media organizations are further affected by two statutory requirements governing

reduce the amount of each fellowship (\$7,000 in 1992), but will reduce by 50 percent the number of fellowships it awards by going to alternate-year funding by discipline. Its 1992 awards will fund video. Filmmakers will have their chance in 1993.

IAP production grants will also be slashed. In FY92 IAP will award \$320,000 for film projects and \$300,000 for video, down 40 percent from FY91's figures of \$600,000 for film and \$450,000 for video. IAP director Linda Earle says that the amount of each award will decline only slightly, while the number of awards will be substantially reduced. For instance, last year 32 film production grants were awarded; this year the number is 19.

Apparatus Productions' Manhattan-based regrant program has been entirely defunded as a result of the budget crunch and will suspend its production grants to emerging filmmakers. In the past, by matching \$16,000 of NYSCA money with private donations, Apparatus had been able to support eight to 12 film projects a year with grants of \$2,000 to \$5,000. Christine Vachon, Apparatus' executive director, indicated that the future of the organization as a whole is uncertain.

The impact of the cuts on organizations is also serious. In no other state do so many organizations receive such a large percentage of their budget from the state arts council. Virtually every organization is under great pressure to trim or to maintain programs at current levels, including Asian CineVision (the core programs of which relied on NYSCA for 35 percent of their budgets in FY91), the Standby program (45 percent), the Experimental Television Center (67 percent), Millennium Film Workshop (35 percent), Squeaky Wheel (a.k.a. Buffalo Media Resources, 55 percent), the film and video programs of Hallwalls (33 percent), and the media program at the Visual Studies Workshop (50 percent). In general, New York state media organizations are experiencing cuts of 30 to 60 percent from FY91.

Aside from Apparatus, the Experimental Television Center (ETC) in Owego, New York, is the only organization queried in any state whose core program is endangered by the budget cuts. In considering the suspension of their unique 20-year-old artist-in-residence program after January 1992, ETC assistant director Sherry Miller Hocking remarked, "If the residency program can't find support, there's no way to make adjustments. There is simply no fat, no way to make \$20,000 in cuts and continue to offer services." With the expectation of a partial funding restora-

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In anticipation of the budget cuts, many organizations have already scaled back or eliminated programs, screenings, and public events, cut back publicity, laid off staff, and raised prices.

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Zippay's experience is anything but unique. Across the nation deficit-ridden state governments are looking to cut spending any way they can, and one popular route is to slash state arts councils' appropriations. Among the large states surveyed for this article, the arts councils of New York, Massachusetts, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Texas, Minnesota, and California had their budgets reduced by between 5 and 70 percent for fiscal year 1992 (FY92).

Throughout the country there will be fewer fellowships, production grants, exhibition and training opportunities, and reduced availability of low-cost production services. In anticipation of the cuts, many organizations have already scaled back or eliminated programs, screenings, and public events, cut back publicity, laid off staff, and raised prices. Nearly every one of the more than 35 media arts organizations surveyed mentioned increased pressure on already overburdened staffs. Most organizations are avoiding special initiatives and one-time projects, preferring instead to marshal their resources to protect core programs. In most states, arts councils have seen their own administration budgets reduced, with

NYSCA's distribution of funds: the agency is required to distribute no less than 55 cents per person within each county, and must distribute 50 percent of its funds to the 238 organizations designated as "primary." Primary organizations include not only the Metropolitan Opera and the Museum of Modern Art, but also Asian CineVision, Squeaky Wheel, Staten Island Community TV, the Foundation for Independent Video and Film, and several other media organizations. The per capita requirement, being based on the general (versus artist) population, has the effect of shifting money out of the geographic areas where artists and arts organizations are concentrated. The two requirements combined mean that very little remains for smaller organizations, particularly in New York City.

New York independents will feel the crunch directly and immediately. The New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA) Artists' Fellowships program, which is 90 percent funded by the IAP, had its grant cut in half, from \$1.8-million to \$941,000. According to Artists' Fellowships Program Associate Mark Bradford, NYFA—in a strategy repeated across the country—will not





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In Massachusetts, the arts council has been reduced to penury and irrelevance. In Michigan, Governor John Engler has indicated his desire to eliminate all state arts funding.

tion, the program will continue until June 1992 with a wait-and-see attitude afterwards.

After extended wrangling between the governor and the legislature, the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts was trimmed 25 percent, from \$12-million to \$9-million for grants. However, deeper cuts are likely. Discussions are now taking place as to how much more should be held back. While it is impossible to gauge the effects of the cuts on individuals and organizations, there will definitely be some. One program likely to be reduced is a state-wide film and video fellowship program (55 percent state funded) administered by Pittsburgh Filmmakers. The Pennsylvania Radio Theater, which administers a \$30,000 regrant program to audio and radio producers, will be entering suspended animation after this year's grants because director Rachel Vaccaro is "fed up and burned out with the arts funding climate in America," although Vaccaro indicates that the arts council may continue the regrant program elsewhere. The Neighborhood Film/Video Project and the Scribe Video Center, both located in Philadelphia, indicate that they will make or have already made cutbacks in staff and overhead, although they expect core programs to continue with only minor reductions.

The Ohio Arts Council (OAC), another major supporter of media, has lost 23 percent of its budget this year, and has seen its staff scaled down from 46 to 35 employees. Both the Media Program, which distributed \$234,000 last year, and the Individual Artists Fellowship Program have been cut back by 23 percent. Ohio organizations will feel the pressure. For instance, the Cleveland Cinematheque, the only place in town for showcasing independent work, used its \$16,000 OAC funding to subsidize a visiting filmmakers program and the exhibition of up to 50 short films a year before feature presentations. Both programs, which put money directly in the pockets of independent producers, will be scaled back.

In Massachusetts, the arts council has been



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reduced to penury and irrelevance. From the good old days of the Dukakis administration, when the Massachusetts Council on the Arts was the nation's second largest per capita funder, direct state arts council funding of nonprofits has dropped from \$21.7-million in the late 1980s, to \$5-million in 1991 to \$1.5-million in 1992. For media the decline is astonishing. In 1989 media projects received \$944,600. By last year it was down to \$145,000. In 1992 it will be a mere \$47,550. Few organizations will strongly feel this year's cuts, because the pain was experienced in the past. For instance, the Boston Film/Video Foundation—the state's largest media center—now receives only one percent of its budget from the state, down from 10 percent in the late 1980s.

The California Arts Council (CAC) has taken a seven percent hit. By absorbing much of the cut in their administrative budget—reducing their 50-member staff by eight and completely suspending site visits—CAC's total grants budget will decline by less than four percent. Because CAC's media arts grants total is small in relation to the state's size (\$405,000 in FY90), the reduction is not expected to have much effect on organizations. However, as in other states, the fellowship program is being scaled back. This year California's media arts fellowship program, offered once every four years, will be reduced 13 percent and will award only 52 \$5,000 fellowships instead of the usual 60.

In Illinois and Minnesota both arts councils have been cut (Illinois by 12 percent and Minnesota's by 5.7 percent), but the reductions will be absorbed in administration and will not affect FY92 grants budgets.

In Michigan, Governor John Engler has indicated his desire to eliminate all state arts funding. After freezing arts council money in mid-year—and thus causing hardship to organizations that had based their programs on signed contracts—he disbanded the Michigan Council for the Arts and replaced it with the newly formed Michigan Council for the Arts and Cultural Affairs, which is itself slated for extinction by 1995. According to Jane Higo, public information manager for the new council, there will be some funding of the arts this year, although as of early September appropriations and programs had not been determined. Nonetheless, funds are likely to be greatly reduced from FY91's \$7.3-million.

While many of the arts councils' cuts have been announced, their impact may not emerge until the new year. If this year's reductions are followed by more of the same next year, many organizations—particularly in New York—may be forced to shut their doors, and independent film- and videomakers and their audiences will be the losers.

*Jon Burris is a photographer and consultant living in New York City.*



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## PROS AND CANNES

### The Cannes International Film Festival

BARBARA SCHARRES

The striking full-page ad in *Le Film Français*, one of several daily program magazines published at the Cannes International Film Festival, seemed bold and challenging, but after a more painstaking translation of the largely French copy also somewhat jarring. Featuring a still from Spike Lee's *Jungle Fever* with a headline that declared "Black Power," the ad cited the strong presence of films by black directors at the festival, mentioning Bill Duke's *A Rage in Harlem*, John Singleton's *Boyz n the Hood*, and British director Isaac Julien's *Young Soul Rebels*. It asked, "Are we witnessing in cinema the same phenomenon that happened in show business? The taking of power by Quincy Jones, the Jackson brothers and sisters, Prince?" The part that provoked more than a second glance was the sentence that concluded "...the black cinema, the soul cinema, is in the act of becoming a 'mainstream' cinema, a 'middle of the road' cinema [both phrases in English]." Wait a minute—*middle of the road*? That had to be the result of a French copywriter's imperfect understanding of

the connotations of the phrase, yet the gaffe unknowingly called attention to the dilemma of more than one auteur-minded US director and possibly named their worst fear: how to seize the advantages of working in the mainstream without necessarily being middle of the road. This was a question expressed in various ways by the handful of US independents and not-so-independents at Cannes.

It could not be called a festival of major revelations this year, but rather one in which both the triumphs and disappointments had a tempest-in-a-teapot quality which is only possible in a closed world like Cannes. Madonna, for those who cared, was the biggest celebrity. Festival history was made by the jury's unprecedented decision to award three major prizes, including the Palme d'Or, to a single film, Joel and Ethan Coen's *Barton Fink*. This also made it the third year in a row that a US film has captured the top prize. Lars von Trier, director of the Danish film *Europa* and sore loser, was responsible for the festival's only bona fide scandal when he referred to jury president Roman Polanski as a midget during the awards ceremony. This festival made it increasingly clear that the African and African American

cinemas have taken significant places on the world scene, while with few exceptions, the European cinema seems distinguished by ever more bizarre coproduction combinations rather than by standout work. (Among the exceptions were Krzysztof Kieslowski's *The Double Life of Veronica* and Jacques Rivette's *La Belle Noiseuse*.) The commercial cinema from the US was well represented, as it generally is at Cannes, including opening and closing night features. US independents were almost invisible in contrast to other years when the competition, Un Certain Regard, the Directors Fortnight, and the French Critics Week combined might yield a group of titles. Independent films previously featured at Cannes include Whit Stillman's *Metropolitan*, Lizzie Borden's *Working Girls*, Jim Jarmusch's *Down by Law*, Spike Lee's *She's Gotta Have It*, and Steven Soderbergh's *sex, lies and videotape*.

Nowhere was this absence more evident than at the Independent Feature Project's (IFP) third annual panel of US directors at Cannes, held in their headquarters in the American Pavilion tent and moderated by film critic Roger Ebert. The eight-member panel included Spike Lee; 22-year-old newcomer John Singleton, whose *Boyz n the*





*Hood* was a pet project of Columbia Pictures' former chair Frank Price; veteran actor and TV director Bill Duke (*A Rage in Harlem*); Hollywood producer and first-time director Irwin Winkler (*Guilty by Suspicion*); theater/opera entrepreneur Peter Sellars (*Cabinet of Dr. Ramirez*); documentary director Fax Bahr, whose *Hearts of Darkness*, on the making of *Apocalypse Now*, was financed by Showtime; and first-feature directors Mark Manos (*Liquid Dreams*) and Adrian Velicescu (*Trumpet #7*). While the subject was independent production, the makeup of the panel made it obvious that there were precious few US productions at the festival that could technically qualify as independent out of the 16 represented in official events. In fact, an uneasy ambiguity surrounded the term "independent" which neither panel nor audience was able to dispel in the course of the discussion. The work of Winkler, producer of *Rocky* and *The Right Stuff*, was delicately described as "independent spirited," while an observer later suggested "entertainment films with food for thought" as a new definition for the problematic word.

In an interview after the festival, IFP program director Sandy Mandelberger expressed disappointment that festival selection personnel had chosen so few "classic independents" (i.e., films both independently financed and released), despite the IFP's efforts to screen almost 70 new features for them last March in New York City. However, he speculated that the definition of "independent," particularly in the European perception of US films, is expanding and evolving to include filmmakers with "an independent vision," meaning those like Duke, Lee, and Singleton, who work within the Hollywood system but have

been able to maintain creative control over their films. Mandelberger said, "What the panel pointed to was that there are in fact all of these different scenarios out there for how people are getting their personal vision onto the screen. Maybe one option worth exploring, although I'm not necessarily encouraging it, is that the studio system has opened up a lot since the mid-seventies. There seem to be cases of people who are making the films they want to make. Now that of course is not an option that's going to be open to a lot of the [panel] attendants."

Back at the panel, there was a distinct attitude of "Where's mine?" coming from the audience. Confronted with eight possible role models, from "independent spirited" to furniture-in-hock self-supporting, the observers were less eager to know how to make a feature on \$50,000 than how they too could have access to a mass audience, how they too could negotiate a position of least compromise in a search for big-time funding and theatrical distribution.

Perhaps the most unusual story of an independent at Cannes was that of Mark Sobel, director of the feature *Little Secrets*, which he and screenwriter Nancy Lee Myatt made on \$100,000 they raised themselves. The film, which Sobel described as "a labor of love" shot over two years' worth of weekends, is a story of six women whose nostalgic slumber party on the eve of their tenth high school reunion evolves into a long night of unmasking illusions, secrets, and white lies. Having completed the film in April, too late for the official selection process for the festival, Sobel made a last-minute decision to cash in his frequent flier miles and go to Cannes with the 35mm print as luggage in the hope that he could get it screened.

Predictably, at first he couldn't even get into the security-heavy Festival Palais, where offices, market screening rooms, and press mailboxes are located. But throughout the festival Sobel banked on cheerful persistence and the sympathy aroused by telling his story to anyone who would listen to gain assistance.

Eventually he was able to book two screening-room slots at a cost of \$350 each, issue invitations to distributors, festival directors, and the press, and aggressively promote his film through a personalized campaign of handwritten notes with attached clippings. He said, "I didn't have the money to take out big ads. Finally, just doing a song and dance at the trade publications and having them take an interest in this David versus Goliath story, they started writing about me, and that created a buzz about my movie." His diligent pursuit of Roger Ebert resulted in the critic attending a screening, one of the few press who did. Ebert subsequently discussed *Little Secrets* and Sobel's story in a column in the *Chicago Sun-Times*. Although he has not yet received an acceptable offer from a theatrical distributor, Sobel sees the greatest value in his trip to Cannes being Ebert's attention to the film in print. His advice to other filmmakers who might consider a brash trip to the festival is positive: "It's very scary, the odds are a million-to-one against coming away with anything successful. The one thing you have to your advantage is you actually have a finished piece of film, which 99.9 percent of the people at the festival don't have. Most people there have nothing but hype."

*Liquid Dreams*, by Mark Manos, was selected for the French Critics' Week and was one of only two low-budget, self-financed independent films



Adrian Velicescu's *Trumpet #7*, an experimental feature that examines "the artist living in a world in which art is no longer possible," was one of the few low-budget independent films invited to Cannes this year.

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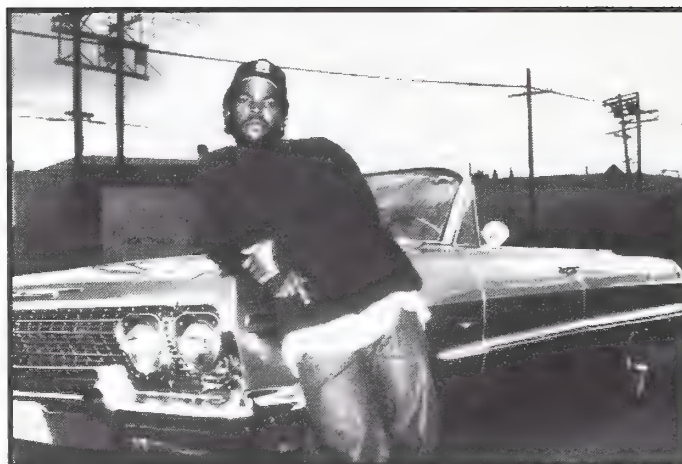
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The strong presence of African American directors was a hallmark of this year's festival. Pictured: rap singer Ice Cube in John Singleton's *Boyz n the Hood*.

Courtesy Columbia Pictures

from the US at the festival (the other being *Trumpet #7*). The film is a futuristic mystery and revenge fantasy involving a woman's search for her sister's killer in a neon-colored world of postmodern dance clubs and brothels. *Liquid Dreams* was already represented by Overseas Film Group for all territories outside the US, and while it still doesn't have distribution at home, screenings at Cannes were the key to making sales to Europe, Japan, and Korea, according to the director. Manos attended Cannes on a miniscule budget harking back to his student days, often depending on party invitations for free food. He describes the value of the festival as "mostly personal" and was especially pleased that *Liquid Dreams* was taken seriously by European critics. He cites encounters with other filmmakers and discussions with audiences as highlights of the trip and says, "The audiences are very passionate. It was good to go and get immersed in the European perspective on film." Along with Sobel, Manos found the IFP helpful in getting acclimated and mentions that Mandelberger sought him out with suggestions and advice.

Adrian Velicescu, whose self-financed \$50,000 experimental feature *Trumpet #7* also screened in the French Critics' Week, has a less optimistic view regarding whether Cannes will have lasting repercussions for himself and producer/screenwriter Crocker Coulson. Ironically enough, the press kit for the film describes it as exploring "the theme of the artist living in a world in which art is no longer possible." It's a dark and stylized narrative that uses decaying urban environments to evoke a musician's complex dream world. Velicescu says, "In the back of your mind you think just because you're there you're going to have deals offered to you. I have to say there's a lot of misinformation. My impression of Cannes is that it's a big circus, a big show." Velicescu realized more concrete value from a screening at the Cinemathèque Française in Paris after the festival, arranged by the French Critics' Week. This resulted in French distribution for the film, while at Cannes he was unable to convince any US distributors to see it. He also adds, "I had hoped we would meet more independent filmmakers like ourselves, people who shared the same ideals

of filmmaking, to put together other projects. We were really outlawed by not having a commercial film and not being interested in that kind of filmmaking. All the people around us, even the independents that wanted to do a project, were shopping around with people who were aiming at the Hollywood market."

So, how worthwhile is it for a US independent, either "classic" or heading-toward-Hollywood, to make a trip to the world's monster film festival? Sobel and Manos were enthusiastic about its eye-opening qualities, Velicescu more grim in his assessment. Mandelberger comments, "I think it's very important. The fact is, one can really see how the mainstream functions and how one can connect with that in different ways. It's an amazing education, though it's important that there exist some kind of buffer which is what I think the IFP and American Pavilion serve as. Otherwise, it's an enormous carnival from which a lone American filmmaker would feel extremely shut out."

Mandelberger acknowledges that the IFP needs to address the problem of how it will represent a greater range of US independents at Cannes if, like this year, the festival selects few. Preliminary plans are in the works for possible market representation and screenings, and a prototype "Off-Hollywood" program will be launched over two-and-a-half days at MIFED before deciding next year's strategy. He adds, in reinforcing his opinion that independents belong at Cannes, "The independent who's raising money individually, who's obsessed with a project for years, works in many ways in isolation, away from the stream—not just the mainstream, but the stream of what's going on in the industry. When filmmakers are in Cannes they feel a part of the overall film business. They learn a lot of practical and pragmatic things and make some concrete contacts that they can utilize afterwards. It gives them that charge that can be very positive. It keeps them on course."

Tune in next year to find out just what course that is.

*Barbara Scharres is the director of the Film Center at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and a freelance writer.*



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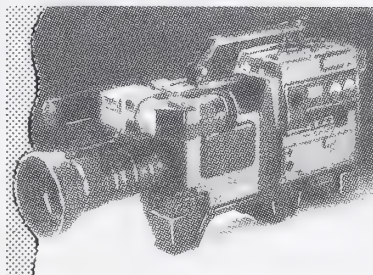
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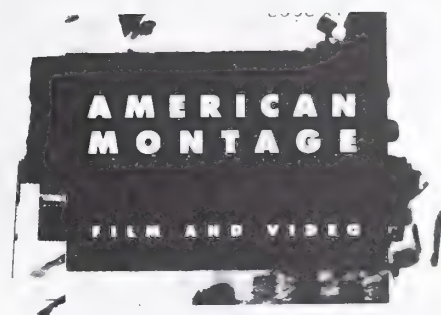
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## SOUTHERN COMFORT

### The Southeastern Media Institute

BETSY NEWMAN

The Confederate flag still flies over the State House in Columbia, South Carolina, and brass stars mark where the Union cannonballs hit. Down the hill at the Capitol Restaurant, they sling local political dirt along with the grits and sausage. But Columbia's provincial feel is deceptive. This slow-moving town on the Broad River is home to one of the country's major media centers, an important PBS station, and the Southeastern Media Institute.

Now in its third year, the Southeastern Media Institute provides an inspired offering of seminars, workshops, and screenings each summer. It is the South's answer to the International Film and Television Workshops in Rockport, Maine—two weeks of affordable, intensive courses in film, video, and radio production, plus two weekends of seminars. The institute is the brainchild of the late Michael Fleishman, who was director of the South Carolina Art Commission's (SCAC) Media Arts Center, the institute's primary sponsor, until his untimely death in July.

For me, a native South Carolinian transplanted to New York, the institute has been a reason to visit the peculiar, special place that is and is not my home. This was my second year on faculty there. I arrived on a Friday night, in plenty of time to make the screening party, or so I thought. The desk clerk called my cab, then said I might have to wait awhile. Forty-five minutes later the taxi arrived, and for another 45 minutes we drove around looking for the McKissick Museum, site of the party and one of only two museums in town. When we arrived, the party was over. I felt a mixture of angst and amusement, an uptight Yankee caught in the Southern time frame like a fly in sweet molasses. But by the next day I had ceased to struggle, enchanted once again by the combination of good manners, intelligence, and self-deprecation that is the South at its best.

Although a state agency, the Media Arts Center sees itself as serving the entire region, a concept foreign to most New Yorkers, whose regional feeling usually extends down the block. Southerners, on the other hand, see themselves as sharing

a vast geographic area, a cultural homeland, and a state of mind. The Southeastern Media Institute grew out of Fleishman's desire to help independents network on a regional scale. Fleishman was a natural networker. In 1987 he organized a satellite teleconference on independent feature film production that linked SCAC with the state public television systems in Georgia and South Carolina, the Image Film/Video Center in Atlanta, and the film offices of both states, plus a variety of independent directors, producers, and distributors. In 1990 Fleishman oversaw the innovative New-View satellite telemarketing and distribution scheme, which managed to get a dozen independent distributors working together under its banner [see "Open Air Market," June 1990].

Fleishman and Susan Leonard, former director of exhibitions and now acting director of SCAC, conceived of the institute as a way for Southern independents to meet each other, upgrade their skills, and learn to navigate the waters of funding and national distribution. They also wanted to break down the provincial component of regionalism by exposing independents in the South to the talent and expertise of people from other parts of the country and vice versa. To achieve their aims, they marshalled the forces of nearly every arts and media organization in Columbia: the University of South Carolina Media Arts Department, which has provided indispensable interns; South Carolina Educational Television, which gives space and equipment in exchange for staff enrollment at the institute; the South Carolina Film Office; the McKissick Museum; and the Columbia Museum of Art. There are also several corporate sponsors, including Kodak. The institute has the feeling of an *event*—everybody in town is involved.

Most of the 190 students attending this year—up from 175 last year—were from the region. This is not to say that students from elsewhere aren't welcome; more than 4,000 postcards advertising the institute went out nationally. I talked to participants from Louisiana, North Carolina, Tennessee, South Carolina, Georgia, Philadelphia, and one from North Dakota, who didn't know how she got on the mailing list. Jan Schochet, a folklorist from Chapel Hill and Asheville, told me she had considered Rockport, but it seemed distant and expensive.



**Pappy Sherrill was out shooting rabbits in his garden when folklorist Nick Spitzer showed up with a shotgun of his own to record an interview as part of his Folklore on the Radio course.**

Photo: Glenn Hare, courtesy South Carolina Arts Commission



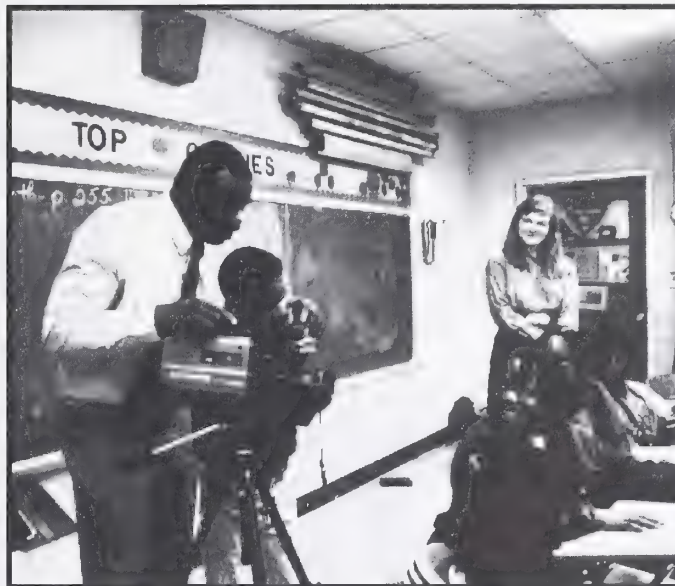
In addition to getting bigger, the media institute seems to have gotten better this year. (It almost didn't take place, due to a freeze on state funds. It was one of the few projects unfrozen on appeal.) This time it was more hands-on, with a wide variety of classes taught by independents from around the country and a few Hollywood types thrown in. During the first week, Vanalyne Green from the Art Institute of Chicago taught her inventive brand of personal documentary in a course called "Video Production: Blending Fact and Fiction," and New York independent Ellen Spiro taught "Low Budget Video and Social Activism." Her students made a documentary on the Confederate flag at the State House and one of them, Lisa Hall, told me she learned more in that week than she had in three years of college. Steve Ross, a producer/director from Tennessee, taught the nuts and bolts of independent production, and Peter Byck, a Hollywood-based music video director, made a music video with his class. They shot a local band, Blighty Body, in one of the old warehouses lining the river where most area bands rehearse. This generated a lot of excitement among resident rock 'n' rollers.

The nightly screenings are a major event. Columbia has that rare commodity, an art movie house, and during the institute's two weeks the Nickelodeon theater devoted a major portion of its schedule to screenings of faculty work. The tiny theater was packed every night, and the makers were there to discuss their work. The result was something that's hard to achieve in a larger city—a sense of the artist as part of a nurturing community.

The work that elicited the most response was particularly Southern. This included a video about Hurricane Hugo made by folklorist Gail Matthews and a group of fifth-graders, and Steve Roszell's *Writing on Water*, a quirky documentary tragic-comedy set in Kentucky. Roszell, a Kentucky documentarian based in Chicago, explained that he likes to show the piece in the South because it gets a better reception. He said it was once introduced at a screening outside the region as "a story about stupid hillbillies who writhe for a few minutes, then die." This got a big laugh from the Nickelodeon audience.

Courses in the second week ran the gamut from low- to high-tech, with my class "Video in the Classroom, or How to Make a Video with One Camcorder, 30 Kids, and No Money" occupying the low-end slot. My students were a creative, eclectic bunch—two public TV staffers, a painter, an anthropologist, a college A/V tech, several teachers, and a filmmaker—who thoroughly explored the possibilities of the camcorder. Using a Panasonic VHS Reporter, we did stop-action with virtually no pre-roll, simulated a dog's point-of-view by strapping the camera to a skateboard and taping dog hair over the lens, rescanned and inserted puppets into a Nintendo game, and recorded slide and overhead projector images.

At the technical high-end was John Le Blanc's cinematography class. Le Blanc is a Hollywood-



A video about Hurricane Hugo made by folklorist Gail Matthews and a group of fifth-graders was a favorite at the institute. Video artist Don Patterson instructs Mayesville students as Matthews looks on.

Courtesy South Carolina Arts Commission

based director of photography who brought a bit of Tinseltown glamor and attitude with him to Columbia, as well as an enormous amount of hardware, including a crane. The lights for his course were donated by Hollywood Rentals in Charlotte, North Carolina—another example of how the institute mobilized forces in the area and involved the burgeoning Carolina film industry. Lighting and shooting one scene from a feature, Le Blanc's students rotated crew positions and got a taste of the big time.

*Metropolitan* coproducer Peter Wentworth taught "Producing Independent Features," and Roszell taught video editing, the class that was most in demand. Thanks to Matthews, who was also one of the institute coordinators, "Folklore on the Radio" was offered for the first time. Taught by Nick Spitzer, a folklorist with a specialty in traditional music who produces for National Public Radio (NPR) and Radio Smithsonian, this class attracted a number of folklorists to the institute, adding a new dimension to the regional focus. Many of us coveted Spitzer's hardware—an incredibly small DAT Walkman that records a very large, lovely sound. Spitzer's class produced a piece for NPR on local country musicians. It included a field recording trip to Bill's Pickin' Parlor, located in the back of a musical instrument store, for a Friday night jam session of area banjo, guitar, and fiddle players. I went along for the local color and got a big kick out of hearing some outstanding banjo picking and several renditions of "Jesus Is My Road Map."

The other element in the institute's full schedule is the series of weekend seminars. Whereas the week-long courses emphasize hands-on production and run about \$250 each, the weekend seminars offer lectures and discussions and cost from \$50-\$100 per weekend. This year they covered scriptwriting, film editing, the Amiga computer, television documentary production, and film criticism. I attended "Producing Documentaries for Television," taught by Lawrence Pitkethly, producer of the *Voices and Visions* series on US

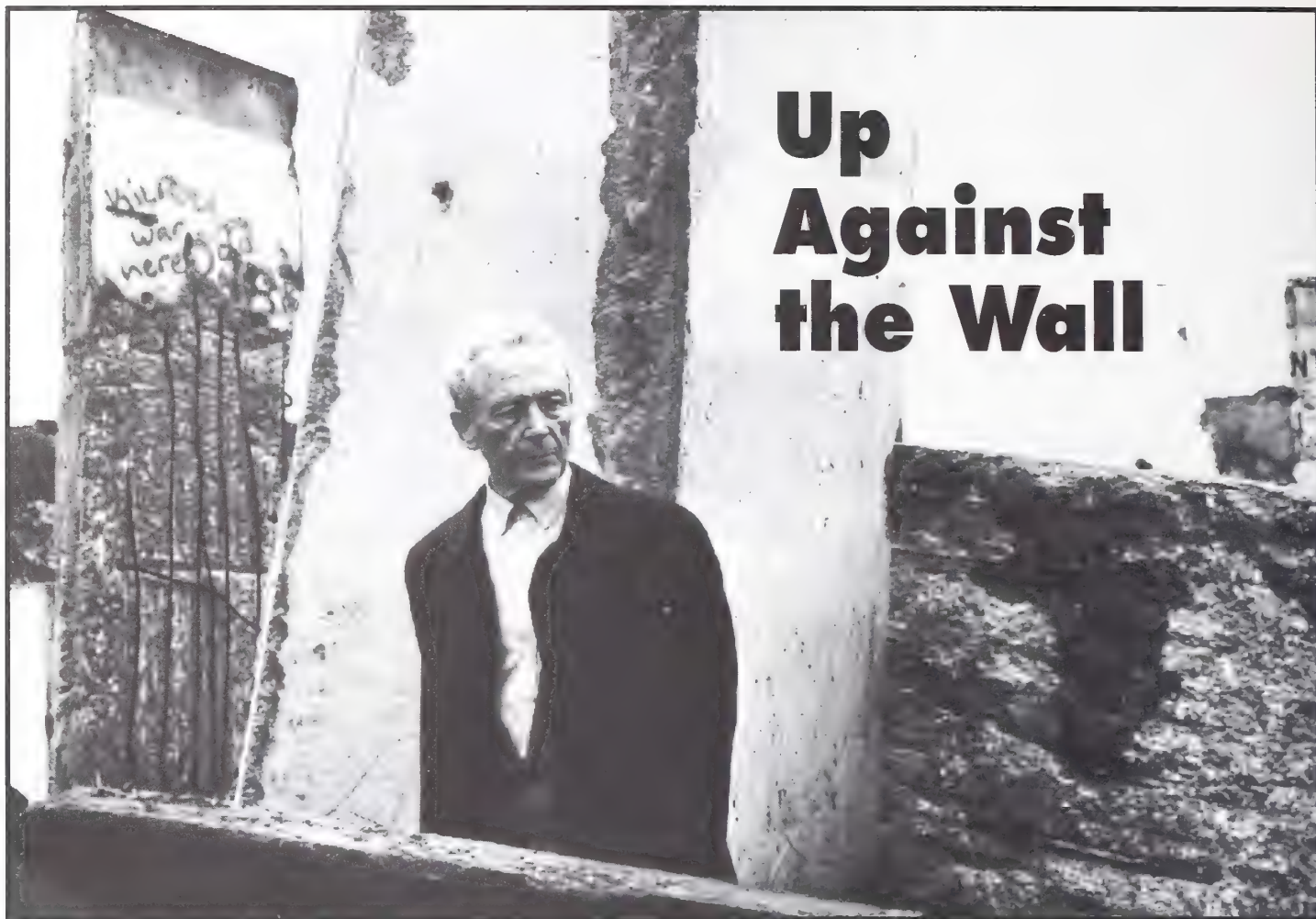
poets. I found two days of listening to the mad Irishman of public TV stimulating. He was generous with his information and discussed every student's pet project with enough encouragement not to dash anyone's hopes, while still providing a serious reality check.

The Southeastern Media Institute was by most accounts a whopping success. Many students stayed for the full two weeks, and everybody I talked to felt they got more than their money's worth. It is a miracle of organization for a small state agency to pull off, and it offers a satisfying blend of production skills and critical reflection. Plus, cheap housing is available on the USC campus, and the institute has designated a different restaurant for dinner each night, so people can eat together. If I'd only read the information packet, my taxi ride from hell would never have happened—institute staff are available by beeper around the clock. Plans for next year were percolating hard and fast by the time I left—including a possible connection with Image in Atlanta, an advanced film production class with 35mm, and sorely needed, more scholarships, especially to encourage people of color to attend.

Perhaps the greatest benefit of something like the Southeastern Media Institute is the opportunity for people of similar interests to get together and schmooze with no other demands on their time. Coke Arial, a writer/producer from Durham, North Carolina, who describes himself as "independently self-unemployed," told me he attended the institute to "step out of his day-to-day alligators." This had something to do with an old Southern saw about what happens to the alligators when you drain the pond. Seeing my confusion, he went on to explain that it was really about getting out of your rut, meeting people, networking. I know what he means—and recommend it.

*Betsy Newman has worked in video since 1978. Her tapes include the award-winning Debate of the Dead and a work-in-progress on the abolitionists Sarah and Angelina Grimke.*





# Up Against the Wall

## German Cinema Confronts a Divided Past

KAREN ROSENBERG

I CAN'T COUNT HOW MANY WEST GERMANS HAVE TOLD ME IN THE LAST year that they don't want to see any more films and videos about what happened when the Berlin wall came down. I should say "former West Germans" because they are all Germans now, but the difference between Wessis and Ossis is still pronounced, though the clothes and haircuts look more alike. On the streets of (West) Berlin you can hear shouts of "Go back where you came from!" when a car with Eastern plates drives a little too fast or too slow. And all too few West German artists and intellectuals seem to want to get beyond the stereotypes held by the proverbial man in the street. Many say they are sick and tired of the "German-German" question because of media overkill. But there is still much to learn about how the German Democratic Republic (GDR) operated. Even though people say "We know all that already," documentary art is not just a means of transmitting new information, but an invitation to reflect on what we overlooked in the familiar.

After attending the Leipzig Film Week in November 1990 and the International Forum section of the Berlin International Film Festival in February 1991, I can attest that the films and videos dealing with the end of a divided Germany are by no means uniform. I wonder if those who shy away from such works aren't hiding discomfort—what psychologists know

as resistance—under the excuse of boredom. The films are varied partly because unification offered an opportunity to reconsider a large topic: German history. Germans have reason to feel uncomfortable with their history, and the "wall films" suggest over and over how present that past is.

Germans who criticized Chile, Argentina, and Greece for their repressive systems while taking a tolerant view of human rights violations in socialist countries are probably embarrassed by recent documentaries like *A Small Piece of Germany* (1991), by Joachim Tschirner, Lew Hohmann, and Klaus Salge, filmmakers from East and West Germany. For after three segments (one by each man) it becomes unmistakably clear that it was GDR policy to shoot at those who attempted to cross the border illegally. State security officers were rewarded with medals and bonuses for this act and transferred to other posts to conceal their identities, reports a former officer (now in management in a West German insurance firm!). A portrait of one major in the border patrol suggests the kind of psychological blocking that such dirty work requires: Major Fülbier focuses on technical issues, like what the wall is made of and what it costs to maintain. Even as he supervises its demolition, he confesses that he cannot understand his sister who was caught trying to escape and spent two-and-a-half years in prison before she married her West German boyfriend and emigrated legally.

To Erika Gregor, codirector of the festival forum, this story exemplifies a theme that goes far back in German history to the medieval era: "The state is more important than the family, more important than anything." I'm not a fan of theories regarding national characteristics, whether about Germans



The subject of *I Was a Happy Man*, Tilbert Eckertz, was falsely accused and jailed for spying during the Stalin era. Nonetheless he wrote to his wife asking her not to forget to buy the latest volumes of Stalin's works.

Courtesy filmmakers

or anyone else, and I see too many examples in world history of unswerving loyalty to a nation to consider this the province of one people. But some Germans these days seem fearful that blind obedience is a German quality. And perhaps that is what has scared them away from another documentary, Sibylle Schönemann's *Locked Up Time* (1990). Audiences for this film have been small in Germany despite the fact that it seems to have everything going for it: the sustained and enthusiastic efforts of its distributor (ex picturis, a young Berlin company committed to independent documentaries), well-publicized and prestigious awards like the Silver Dove at Leipzig and a national film prize, and praise from the vast majority of critics.

Schönemann was an East German filmmaker in her early thirties employed by the state film studio, DEFA, when she and her husband (also a DEFA filmmaker) applied for an exit visa for themselves and their two children. Shortly thereafter they were both arrested, tried, and convicted for "injury to the activity of the state." In 1985, after some months behind bars, they were shipped off with other prisoners to West Germany, which had bought their release. *Locked Up Time* is a moving autobiographical documentary which focuses not just on Schönemann's prison experience but on the people who made it happen: the judge, the jurors, the warden, the studio head, the lieutenant-colonel of the Department of State Security assigned to DEFA, etc. In 1990, after the wall came down, Schönemann could meet them in East Germany on her own terms—as a filmmaker with a camera team in tow—that is, if they would meet with her.

Sadly but predictably, few would, and this film (like Marcel Ophuls' cinematic hunt after Nazi war criminals, with which it is often compared) records who hung up on her, who shook her hand only through a fence, who turned his back to the camera. These images and sounds of rejection are dramatic enough, but perhaps more frightening are the justifications of those who consented to speak with her. Schönemann stands a mike next to her interviewees (which sometimes appears in the frame, reminding us that they are aware of its presence) and asks restrained but direct questions like, "Do you remember me?" She gives them time to say, "I'm sorry about what happened to you, about what I did to you." But only one admits some guilt or responsibility, saying, "[To act otherwise] would have required more personal courage than I had, because of the consequences." All the rest offer some version of the "I was only following orders" line. We can surmise that an apology is seen as a sign of weakness, that people fear future repercussions, and that this society accepts the premise that history is ruled by powerful forces, not by the small actions of ordinary individuals. Most critics pointed out what the film only implies: some lessons of the Second World War have not been well learned.

The Holocaust is the monster that won't die, despite the much-discussed attempt of many Germans to repress it. Although the news media hailed unification as an end to the war, a healing of old wounds, *Locked Up Time* undermines that cliché. Echoes of the Nazi era are still being heard. And Schönemann told me in Leipzig that she feels another cover-up is going on, as after World War II when only a superficial investigation of peoples' Nazi

past took place. A long shot of the locked secret police archives at the end of the documentary makes that clear. As far as she's concerned, her case is not yet closed. In fact, as a detective story, the film remains inconclusive. What evidence did the state have to convict her? What role did the studio play in her conviction? (Some answers came out and were reported in interviews only after the film was completed.)

The personal narrative element gives *Locked Up Time* its immediacy, tension, and accessibility—although at the price of occasional staginess and sentimentality (as when Schönemann reenacts some of her prison experiences). And I fear that while Schönemann's emotions come through loud and clear, the motivations of her persecutors get rather shortchanged. It's easy to laugh when the prison warden who censored Schönemann's letters and blocked her mother's visit says she chose her job because she likes working with people. But in another 1990 documentary, *Berlin, Friedrichstrasse Railroad Station*, that line loses its humor as it is repeated by East Germans employed in the security apparatus at a border-crossing between East and West.

Like Schönemann, the four women from East and West who made this film together—Konstanze Binder, Lilly Grote, the late Ulrike Herdin, and Julia Kunert—pose ostensibly simple questions and let people characterize themselves by their responses. Even as the wall in the station separating East from West is being dismantled, the stiff officialese of East German officers remains intact: "Here I should add that our passport controllers exercised their duties with pleasure and derived personal satisfaction from this fascinating profession in which they had the opportunity to work with people." The passport controllers themselves, who checked ear bumps to catch a false document (their fascinating, hilarious handbook of physical types alone is worth the price of admission to the film), echo that the "understanding" that comes from constant contact with travelers made their job fun. *Berlin, Friedrichstrasse Railroad Station* achieves pathos when an East German border guard facing unemployment says, "I'd like to keep up contact with...you know, the masses. That's important for me—not being



"Do you remember me?" In *Locked Up Time*, director Sibylle Schönemann interviews her former interrogator.

Courtesy filmmaker



## Double Deutsch: The Leipzig and Oberhausen Film Festivals

Now that ideological censorship has been lifted in East Germany, the Leipzig International Filmweek for Documentary and Animated Film is becoming a strong festival. The range of documentaries from different countries and traditions is extraordinary at this point. Because the festival attracts people who are serious about documentary, it is a good place to talk with filmmakers and critics. Eastern European nonfiction films critical of socialist history and environmental policy were featured in the festival last November, and although long-standing ties to Latin America and other regions were broken by the collapse of East German embassies abroad, film historian Christiane Mückenberger, director of the festival, is trying to mend them, so that more films from outside Europe will be screened in the future.

The animation section of Leipzig, however, was much weaker than that at the 1991 Oberhausen International Short Film Days, where one can follow the careers of established talents like Raimund Krumme and the Brothers Quay and acquaint oneself with young Eastern Europeans developing that region's absurdist, surrealist traditions. (One wonders why Leipzig keeps this section at all.) Although Oberhausen includes some social documentaries that would be at home in Leipzig (like Laima Zurgina's *They Are My Sons, Too*, 1990, about the formerly taboo subject of noncombatant deaths in the Soviet army), the festival is much more oriented towards the experimental. I expect that tastes at Leipzig will expand as ex-East Germans gain more familiarity with documentaries that aren't interview-based. But East German painter/filmmaker Jürgen Böttcher told an interviewer that his film *The Wall* (see accompanying article) flopped at Leipzig in 1990; I think its unconventional filmic language was not understandable to most viewers there.

Oberhausen is a good place to check out the progress of the younger generation of West German experimental filmmakers—such as Joachim Bode, Matthias Müller, the Alte Kinder collective, and the Schmelzdahin (Meltaway) group—as they emerge from the no-budget and super 8 festival circuits. I was especially taken with an eight-minute animation film by Sarah Pucill of Britain, *You Be Mother* (1990), that projected parts of a woman's face onto domestic objects to suggest the way traditional femininity expresses itself in the provider role. These works, and Krumme's, will be part of a German film program that Oberhausen is circulating internationally. But Oberhausen's eclecticism creates some surprises: the longest film in that circulating program will be *To Istanbul, as Fast as Possible* (1990), by Andreas Dresen, a student at the East German film school in Potsdam/Babelsberg, whom I met four years ago at an amateur film festival [see "Off-Off-Off Cinema: West German Super 8," March 1987]. This 45-minute fiction film employs the realist, humanist cinematic vocabulary of the East German (DEFA) studio to tell the story of a man who tries to use a woman for a cheap place to live and, instead, develops sympathy for her.

It is rare to find a West German of Dresen's age so comfortable with the conventions of narrative cinema. At present, the film cultures of the two Germanys remain identifiable and distinct. The East German fiction film tends to be more realistic than the West German, and the East German documentary often focuses on stories from everyday reality and generally eschews voiceover commentary, unconventional montage, and fast editing. It will be interesting to watch the Leipzig and Oberhausen festivals to see if and how the West and East German traditions intertwine in the future.

KR



alone." As Grote noted at the forum screening, "When we heard this for the third time, we realized these people had been taught that their job is to work with people." Although the film ends with a policeman explaining, "We just carried out orders," it goes beyond that excuse, revealing the platitudes that people use to block a sense of horror about their own lives. When the ideology of the GDR supplied people with a self-justification, some evidently believed it.

According to East German writer Rolf Richter, the dissolution of the GDR broke down the psychological defenses of many East Germans, at least for a while: "People had the feeling that they had to take a look at their lives now and come to terms with themselves." This made it possible for him and East German documentary filmmaker Eduard Schreiber to shoot a cinematic portrait called *I Was a Happy Man* (1990). Its subject is Tilbert Eckertz, who was falsely accused of spying during the Stalin era and imprisoned in the GDR, yet never gave up his belief in the East German state. Later he even wrote an angry letter to his daughter when she was in detention for trying to escape. "Men are able to repress things more," his daughter tells the camera. Schreiber places Eckertz's self-analysis at the end of the film, where viewers will remember it better: "I lost my youthful tolerance in the Nazi era, for the Nazis had no tolerance." An interviewer remarked to the filmmaker that many West Germans recognize their fathers in this East German man. This is because of the common past prior to 1945 that West and East Germans share. As Schreiber said, "That shows that in this country, in Germany—Eckertz was born around 1913—a more or less specific personality type came into being [before and during the Nazi era].... He follows patterns of behavior that are not associated first and foremost with East Germany." The influence of this behavior pattern on subsequent generations of Germans is suggested in the film when Eckertz's grandson shows similar tendencies toward a repression of emotions.

**A**LTHOUGH MOST FILMS THAT I SAW ON THE CHANGES IN GERMANY relied chiefly on interviews to reflect on history, a few were primarily visual in their means of expression. For example, in Jürgen Böttcher's almost wordless documentary *The Wall* (1990), Berlin is an uncanny place where chronology doesn't apply: as an outdoor concert celebrates unification, a chimney-sweep out of the nineteenth century gets to work. There are evocative sequences in which Böttcher projects archival footage onto a section of the wall soon to be destroyed. At one point we see shots of the era of the wall's construction projected onto the wall, while its graffiti represents yet another stage of the wall's history. Unfortunately, by repeating the same devices too often the filmmaker dissipates their effectiveness. Nevertheless, his long takes counteract clichés. Festivities begin to look less appealing and more like an annoying frat bash as they go on and on. In contrast to the ecstatic pitch of the media, Böttcher sounds a note of elegy when he shows dismantled sections of the wall standing like enormous gravestones in a field. It's not at all clear what should be mourned—the



People who chip at the Berlin wall for fun and profit are known as "wall peckers." Jürgen Böttcher's film *The Wall* looks at the great divider's last days.

Courtesy filmmaker

death of utopian hopes, perhaps? Whatever it may be, I'm glad Böttcher didn't assign it a name.

To those who have been following recent West German (and especially West Berlin) filmmaking, shots of the unified city were uncannily familiar. It shouldn't be surprising that some filmmakers imagined the destruction of the wall before it seemed possible and anticipated images later seen on television. After all, one function of art is to draw visions. The 15-minute film *Berlin Blue* (1986), by Hartmut Jahn and Peter Wensierski, is a look at artistic activity around and on the wall. Animation techniques make it seem as if people are tap dancing on the wall and drilling holes in it. Ingo Kratisch and Jutta Sartory edited together short, mostly wordless shots of both halves of the city, generally photographed with a static camera, to create a feature-length picture of one modern Berlin. Their underappreciated film *O Logical Garden* (1988)—a play on the name of West Berlin's main railroad station, Zoological Garden—implies there's a logic in these moving "postcards." In fact, if you look carefully, you'll notice many of them suggest that, through acts of will, the past is present in Berlin.

*O Logical Garden* depicts the process of preservation with shots of museums, theaters, memorials to the Holocaust, archaeological digs, and the cleaning and painting of public buildings. The process is evident, too, in smaller, private gestures, like the polishing of silver or the cleaning of leaves off a grave. I understand this as a film about practicing remembrance. In its quiet way, it can teach you how to commemorate. When Sartory lays a small stone on a grave with Hebrew lettering, she is employing a Jewish ritual for honoring the dead. It's then not hard to guess what it means when she later puts stones on doorsteps around the city. Who was deported from this house? The filmmakers never say, and curiosity carries you out of the film into the city and into German history.

The next documentary by Kratisch and Sartory, *Wanting and Not Wanting the Same Thing* (1990), can be seen as a more conversationally-based sequel to *O Logical Garden*, for it follows some of the people who appeared there, such as the sociologist responsible for organizing the restoration of the Orthodox Adass Jisroel cemetery in East Berlin and the musician whose everyday objects (like plastic bottles and electric wires) create the disquieting sounds that heighten the tension in their earlier film. All of the participants are, like the filmmakers themselves, Berliners and artists/intellectuals, loners in their work but friends who talk animatedly around the dinner table. A number of them are Jews from various lands, of different degrees of religiosity (shades of the mix in pre-war Berlin): Architect Myra Warhaftig is chronicling the activity of exiled Jewish architects whose buildings have been altered or forgotten; writer Jeannette Lander models her work on the Torah page, in which a central text is sur-

rounded by later commentary. Such individuals demonstrate that the past can be maintained only through persistent, careful effort—the kind that a gardener gives to living things.

*Wanting and Not Wanting the Same Thing* is an unusual, noteworthy film within the recent crop of German documentaries in that it celebrates a functioning community made up of Berliners of various origins. Gently and affectingly, it raises the hope that Germany—or any other place, for that matter—is not condemned by its history and can build a society that combines supportiveness and independent thought. It suggests, too, that the repression of the past is not an inevitable response to pain, and that people can and do live with the remembrance of a holocaust. The fact that West and East German filmmakers are collaborating and have produced strong works like *Berlin*, *Friedrichstrasse Railroad Station* and *A Small Piece of Germany* is an important sign that the anger and prejudice that divides Germans as much as any wall can be overcome.

I don't measure the significance of the "wall films" by the number of German viewers they have had this year, because I don't see these documentaries as works only for immediate local consumption. The changes in Germany have produced a self-reflection that should be seen in the future and abroad. (The rights to *Locked Up Time*, *The Wall*, and *Berlin, Friedrichstrasse Railroad Station* have been bought by the Goethe Institute for worldwide distribution through the private cultural agency Internationes.) If many Germans today are uncomfortable with their history, then I'm suspicious of any works that soothe and satisfy them. What's more interesting are the documentaries that have provoked the resistance of audiences in Germany.

Karen Rosenberg's articles on cultural history have appeared in journals and books in Western Europe, the US, and Japan. She has published recently in the *Women's Review of Books* and *Technology Review* after having spent nine months in Berlin. She now writes and teaches in Vienna.

Dining is a symbol of community in Ingo Kratisch and Jutta Sartory's *Wanting and Not Wanting the Same Thing*, about artists and intellectuals in contemporary Berlin.

Courtesy Sartory Film



# A MIRAGE IN THE DESERT?

## African Women Directors at FESPACO

CLAIRE ANDRADE-WATKINS

EVERY OTHER YEAR, THOUSANDS TAKE TO THE AIR FROM POINTS IN AFRICA, Europe, and the US to head to the Festival Panafricain du Cinéma du Ouagadougou (FESPACO). Braving searing heat and dust rising from the Sahara Desert, the hordes descend on Ouagadougou, or "Ouaga," as it is affectionately called, the capital city of the tiny West African country Burkina Faso (formerly Upper Volta) for the continent's biggest cultural event.

Held in alternate years from the Carthage Film Festival in Tunisia, the eight-day FESPACO showcases productions from sub-Saharan Africa and the diaspora—particularly the Caribbean, US, and Brazil. Burkina Faso was one of the first West African countries to nationalize film production and distribution and maintains a firm commitment to African cinema. The brief term of charismatic President Thomas Sankara, who came to power in 1983, witnessed an unprecedented increase in popular support for African film within Burkina. Sankara threw open the doors to African Americans and others from the diaspora with a formal invitation to the ninth festival in 1985, followed again by a warm reception in 1987. His successor, Blaise Campore, has continued this commitment, which, along with strong international support, particularly from France, has sustained Burkina as the home of FESPACO.

Now in its twelfth year, FESPACO remains the best place to see new African talent and gauge the level of activity and interests of African filmmakers. It is a festival created by African filmmakers for two main purposes. The first and more visible side of FESPACO is the international showcase of African cinema. But FESPACO is also the preeminent meeting place for African filmmakers. Day and night, clusters of directors, producers, critics, journalists, scholars, actors, and distributors from all over the world can be seen milling around the pool of Hôtel Indépendance, the festival's unofficial hub. There and elsewhere they debate issues surrounding African cinema, from its financing to its audience and distribution within the continent and abroad.

Films are screened from morning to night in the city and outlying areas, in theaters ranging from the posh, air-conditioned Burkina to the wonderful open-air Riale and Neerwaya theaters where one sits comfortably on bench chairs under the stars and enjoys the lively calls, laughter, and warnings shouted by the African audience to their favorite characters.

The wise and experienced FESPACO visitor comes armed with festival French. Other essential skills are quickly acquired, such as resisting the lure of the open markets where fabulous wares from all over West Africa are sold and sidestepping myriad street vendors. If your foray into the city is successfully negotiated, with enough bottled water for the day (dehydration is a reality when temperatures hover around 100 degrees Fahrenheit), a veritable film feast of new and classic African films awaits you. This year's

festival featured 68 films, with 33 African countries participating and close to half-a-million visitors—a quantum leap from the first festival in 1969, when five countries took part and the audience totaled 20,000.

This year's festival opened with *Karim and Sala*, the fourth feature by internationally acclaimed Burkina Faso filmmaker Idrissa Ouedrago. Ouedrago's previous feature, *Tilai*, won FESPACO's grand prize and was later a hit at Cannes, marking the first time a native son of Burkina earned this prestigious award. Other festival highlights attest to the wide range of new faces and work on the scene, with premieres from Cameroon, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Guinea Conakry.

A festival favorite, *Ta Dona*, by Adama Drabo from Mali, received the Oumarou Ganda award for outstanding first work. In it, Drabo weaves Bambara mysticism and ritual—an increasingly recognizable trait of Malian films—into the quest of a young engineer for the lost seventh Canari, the last link in a mystical chain of knowledge. Drabo is part of an impressive line of filmmakers from Mali, whose ranks include Souleymane Cisse and Cheik Cissoko.

Burkina Faso launched several new features. *Laada* (meaning traditional law), Idrissa Touré's first feature, examines a group of young men as they choose between following the path of traditional life or leaving for the city. Abdoulaye Sow's *Yelbeedo*, a Burkina Faso/Togo coproduction, examines the issue of abandoned children and incest through the eyes of a young couple who take in a baby left on the street. Pierre Yameogo's *Lafi* reveals the dilemma and anxiety of a recent graduate who wishes to attend medical school abroad despite administrators' fears that, like many others, he may not return home with his new skills.

Cameroonian novelist Baskin B. Kobbio garnered special mention in the Critic's Prize his second film and first feature, *Sango Malo*. Based on Kobbio's novel, this tight narrative tells the story of a young, progressive teacher who introduces his students to ideas on politics and sex, much to the chagrin of the headmaster. He eventually collides with the village chief and nobility when he tries to start a peasant cooperative.

*Allah Tantou*, an outstanding documentary by David Achkar of Paris/Guinea Conakry, is a brilliantly crafted purview of the heady, early days of Sekou Toure, one of Africa's first nationalist leaders. *Allah Tantou*, which won the Telcipro award, is a beautiful mixture of archival footage, home movies of the director's father, who was an official under Toure, and stunning dramatic segments of the father's imprisonment. The work is an absorbing glimpse of a fascinating moment in history.

Tunisian filmmaker Ferid Boughedir, a longtime journalist on African cinema, presented his first feature, *Halfaouine*, a charming and sensual portrait of a young boy crossing the bridge to manhood. Among other award-winning films was Felix de Rooy's (Curacao) *Almacita di Desolato*. This netted a Paul Robeson Award, and a special mention went to British director Auguste Reece's *Twilight City*.





Although African women have been prominent in front of the camera, not until Sarah Maldoror's *Sambizanga* (1972) were women recognized as directors.

Courtesy filmmaker

Sahara have achieved the prominence of their male counterparts. In 1972 Sarah Maldoror (Guadeloupe/Angola) became established as the first African woman director with her feature *Sambizanga*. She subsequently went on to make close to 20 films. Maldoror was followed by Senegalese Safi Faye, who has made about 10 films, including two features, *Peasant Letter* (1975) and *Fad' jal* (1979), since 1975, and is currently completing her third. This stands in contrast to countries north of the Sahara, particularly Tunisia, Algeria, and Egypt. They have long-standing film traditions and industries from which a respectable cadre of women directors has emerged.

Tucked in the corner of FESPACO was a workshop on Women, Cinema, TV, and Video in Africa, organized in collaboration with the Montreal organization Vues d'Afrique, which hosts a large annual festival of African film. This workshop was the very first gathering of women from Africa and the diaspora. It brought together close to 100 invited guests from the continent, the US, Europe, and the Caribbean. According to the official communiqué, the workshop was intended to identify the problems facing women in their fields and

come up with strategies ensuring their participation in media and its development.

At least eight women filmmakers were in attendance. Two, Flora Shelling M'mbugu from Tanzania and Anne Mungai from Kenya, came seeking financing for feature projects they had in hand. Veterans Sarah Maldoror and Miriama Hima from Niger, plus Attia Kehena (Tunisia), Kadiatou Konate (Mali), Grace Kenyua (Kenya), Sepati Bulane (South Africa), and Lola Fani Kayode (Nigeria) also took part. For most participants, it was the first time they had met women engaged in similar work from other countries.

The energy found at the workshop generated the kind of excitement that marked earlier start-up initiatives at FESPACO, such as the International Market for African Film and Television (MICA) in 1983 and the International Partnership Day in 1989. If a typical conference had taken place, the following sequence would have unfolded: The group would be well met, engage in fruitful dialogue, have a substantive closing plenary, establish an agenda for the next gathering, and top off the whole event with gracious multilingual social events, finally departing with warm feelings of sisterhood and a common sense of mission and purpose for women in cinema, TV, and video in Africa and the diaspora.

It didn't happen. Instead, the workshop unleashed a riptide of emotion, confusion, and animosity which tore across the festival. It triggered often heated debates on a broad range of areas, including the relationship of the diaspora to Africa, relations between the French- and English-speaking regions of Africa and their positions within African cinema, and the

Of the 32 films in competition, none were by sub-Saharan women, and those films in the festival by women from the diaspora—Zeinabu irene Davis and Carmen Coustaut from the US—were scheduled late in the week and hard to find. The invisibility of African women behind the camera is not unusual. Addressing and correcting this inequity has been a priority of the Fédération Panafricaine des Cinéastes (FEPACI) since its conception in 1969. An organization of African filmmakers from 33 countries, FEPACI has served as a powerful lobbying voice for African cinema within the continent and abroad.

The role of women as central characters in films, however, is an honorable and long-standing tradition in sub-Saharan Africa. Powerful female characters have anchored such classic films as Senegalese director Ousmane Sembene's *Ceddo* and *Emitai*, Ivory Coast director Desire Ecaré's *Faces of Women*, and Med Hondo's masterful portrayal of the legendary warrior queen *Sarrounia*. More recently themes concerning African women's struggle against female circumcision have been manfully tackled by Cheik Cissoko in *Finzan*.

In part the scarcity of women directors has to do with the scarcity of resources for film south of the Sahara. Only a very small group of filmmakers, male or female, are actively engaged in African film production. Feature filmmakers number no more than 40 or 50, with 20 or 30 having financing at any given time. Still, scarce resources alone do not explain why, in African film's 30-year history, only two women south of the





Among the premieres at this year's FESPACO was Pierre Yameogo's *Lafi*. This story of an aspiring medical student presents a wry, humorous portrait of the neighborhood life, gossip, and adventures of Burkinabe youth.

Courtesy filmmaker



*Laada*, a first feature by Idrissa Touré, was one of several new Burkinabe films screened this year.

Courtesy filmmaker

toward distribution and editing. Even those with extensive production backgrounds, such as Deborah Ogazuma, a senior producer at the government-owned Nigerian Television Authority, the country's largest television network, feel restricted. Ogazuma is one of the few women in Nigerian television to direct drama. Her projects have included 41 live weekly episodes based on a literary adaptation of the novel *Magana Jari Ce* (*Wisdom Is an Asset*). Ogazuma notes, however, that women are steered away from directing drama and toward women's magazine and children's programming.

These bits and pieces of different women's experiences are part of a larger pattern of problems that, prior to the workshop, women struggled with in isolation. These were summarized in the workshop's opening statement by chair Annette M'baye D'erneville, who laid out the program's broad objectives: 1) provide a forum for women to exchange and share their experiences; 2) adopt propositions that will help ensure women their rightful place, particularly in the areas of training and production; 3) devise a follow-up structure for dialogue and common action; 4) identify the frustrations of women professionals and produce images that consciously reflect women's realities, social contexts, cultures, and histories; and 5) disseminate that perspective.

The workshop made clear that while African women filmmakers share many of the same obstacles, there are also vast differences. It seemed that participants were looking at the role of women—in cinema, Africa, and the diaspora—through lenses of different focal lengths. Their widely divergent expectations reflected the tremendous range of the participants' complex cultural, historical, political, and societal realities.

Most advancements in African cinema have been the result of arduous and painstaking effort over many years. Viewed from this perspective, the women's workshop was a painful birth for what may become a new network of professional peers. Perhaps holding it under the aegis of FEPACI and FESPACO was inappropriate. Anything that occurs within such a context is subjected to a tremendous amount of international attention. For such a fledgling initiative, some privacy for dialogue, growth, mistakes and the formation of a sense of identity might have been better for meeting the workshop's objections and mission.

The workshop did produce some concrete results. An eight-member panel of women from Burkina Faso, Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa, Rwanda, Gabon, and Tunisia was established and workshop participants identified four initial projects for the panel to pursue: 1) develop a repository for film and audiovisual works by African women; 2) establish subregional itinerant training workshops; 3) train staff to conduct these workshops; and 4) support the participation of women at film festivals in Africa, the Caribbean, and elsewhere. In addition to these plausible and pragmatic goals, an appeal was made by the panel in its closing communiqué to FEPACI to support the initiative under its aegis, in addition to generally increasing its activism for women in the film profession.

appropriateness of FESPACO as the forum for this workshop.

Following a week of informal and cordial meetings between African women and a handful from the diaspora prior to the festival's official start, the workshop opened with an unexpected request. As invitees gathered around the table, the panel chair asked all non-Africans to leave the meeting. Most of the participants were caught by surprise, particularly given the legendary warmth and camaraderie of the festival. Over the hubbub, the request was repeated. Things quickly deteriorated.

Emotional addresses from women of the diaspora had the poor translators at a loss for words, clearly distressed by the messages they were forced to convey back and forth between workshop spokeswomen and participants. Further confusion ensued as a debate arose on what exactly constitutes an African. Women born in Africa but raised elsewhere angrily defended their right to be there, as did women born abroad of African parents. Before the debate was over, most of the "others" had left.

The emotional momentum caught festival organizers off guard. Some Africans saw the incident as a misunderstanding; others, particularly from the diaspora, saw it as a rejection of non-Africans. A call for action came from many fronts to make amends to the diaspora and put the workshop back on course. A formal letter of protest was sent to festival organizers by several women of the diaspora. Subsequently there were many abashed and embarrassed apologies by all parties.

At a glance, the workshop could be perceived as an unmitigated disaster. But over the long run, it could be a catalyst for understanding and growth. During the pre-workshop discussions and workshop itself, patterns emerged that showed many more African women working in television and audiovisual services than in film. Those in cinema were generally actresses, with no ready access to technical training for production. In the television and audiovisual sectors, participants noted that women were often steered

The pattern of the women's workshop is consistent with the vision and weaknesses associated with the development and dissemination of African cinema as a whole. The dominance of Africa's French-speaking areas in the development of cinema is the direct result of a very aggressive program by





Rasheeda Allen is waiting for her period and trying to trick fate in Zeinabu irene Davis' *Cycles*, one of two films by diaspora women screened at FESPACO.

Courtesy filmmaker

*Sango Malo*, by Cameroonian novelist Basek Ba Kobhio, garnered special mention in the Paul Robeson category for Film from the Diaspora.

Courtesy filmmaker



France on the eve of its colonies' independence in 1960. France distributed financial and technical assistance and expertise through the Ministry of Cooperation in areas ranging from agronomy to cultural expression. Support to cinema was considered important because it coincided with France's intent to maintain the cultural and linguistic bonds that had characterized the colonial relationship. In contrast, France's colonial counterpart, Britain, had no great interest in supporting cinema by Africans, either before or after independence.

The catch 22, however, was that the financial and technical facilities and personnel provided by France were based in Europe. Distribution and exhibition circuits within Africa were also controlled by non-Africans. So, paradoxically, the most prolific region of African film production teetered on a very precarious base—one without an indigenous infrastructure for production, distribution, and exhibition.

In 1980 France began to shift funding from individual African film projects toward experiments in regional infrastructure. When this happened, the filmmaking community was jolted into seeking alternative means of support. The emphasis on strong ideological, Marxist, postcolonial critiques in film during the subsidized 1960s through late 1970s gave way to a focus on building infrastructures, both through South-to-South cooperation and North-to-South collaborations that could help develop Africa's film resources, technical expertise, and trained personnel.

FESPACO is the forum through which filmmakers address such concerns and chart the future course of African cinema. It is regular practice for FESPACO to focus on specific themes through its workshops, colloquia, and panels. In the past, programs on the oral tradition and narrative film structure and international coproduction have anchored significant activities during the week, often launching major continent-wide initiatives. One such venture was the International Market for African Film and Television, which celebrated its fifth anniversary at FESPACO this year. Set up at the George Méliès Center, a beautifully appointed air-conditioned space, the market served as a convenient meeting place for filmmakers and distributors. Both festival films and other works from Africa, the Caribbean, US,

and Brazil were available for buyers, distributors, and exhibitors to screen at their convenience.

FESPACO's major business agenda centered on the Second International Partnership Day, an initiative of FEPACI, which built on the foundation laid during the 1989 festival. The idea at this year's International Partnership Day was to look toward aggressively maximizing north-to-south and south-to-south cooperation and coproduction in order to obtain the resources necessary to finance and disseminate African cinema. Over 100 participants came together, including numerous representatives from Europe and the US—including Britain's BBC and Channel Four, ZDF in Germany, Centro *Orientamo Educativo* in Italy, *Agence de Coopération, Culturelle, et Technique* in France, and the Rockefeller Foundation in the US.

Although African cinema's basic problem of undercapitalization has not been resolved, both dialogue and action on this matter are now moving beyond the rudiments of production to other, more internationally attuned concerns, such as competitiveness in the foreign market and the accessibility of African films to non-African audiences.

Even with the current interest in African cinema at international festivals and the promising prospects of partnership, there still are no guarantees for the individual filmmakers. They must still log thousands of miles on the gypsy trail, hopping between three continents to pursue partnership and coproduction opportunities. Despite daunting obstacles, African filmmakers persevere. It is this vitality and courage that makes FESPACO more than just a film festival. FESPACO showcases a cinema on the move and a movement with potentially unlimited range and impact within the continent and throughout the global community.

*Claire Andrade-Watkins is a filmmaker and historian specializing in African cinema and an invited participant to FESPACO since 1985. She is assistant professor of mass communication at Emerson College and is currently a visiting professor in Wellesley College's Black Studies Department.*

## VIVE LA REVOLUTION

### Ken McMullen's Lessons in History

BARBARA OSBORN

Most political features made in the US, from *Reds* to *El Norte*, are catharsis films. They make us cry and wring our hands, and then we go home to our warm beds. Ultimately we learn nothing about politics. Across the Atlantic, British director Ken McMullen makes political films, but they aren't hand-wringers. They're intended to help us learn from history. "The films are instructional," McMullen admits, "but I don't want to preach. I'm interested in human dilemmas. I'm fascinated by politics, particularly the unconscious aspect." McMullen's films look at the force of the unconscious in the making of history.

cracking. But McMullen's films aren't remote historical dramas. They reflect many of the problems that plague contemporary political transformation.

McMullen didn't set out to make an ensemble of historical films—or even films at all. He learned politics as a teenager working in a cotton mill that Engels once owned. While working there he read Marx's analysis of the British cotton industry in *Das Kapital*. Eventually he went to art school and began making experimental films and documentaries. An interest in theater and performance art ultimately led to features. His recent films unite all these influences—politics, theater, and the avant garde.

McMullen's three most recent features are historical narratives with period costumes and sets. The scripts are extensively researched and take several years to compile. Archival footage and other historical material lend the productions additional credibility and accuracy. Not quite epic scale, the films look bigger budget than they are. Production costs range from just under \$1-million to \$5-million and have been financed primarily by Channel Four in the UK, ZDF in Germany, and France's La Sept.

Each film arises out of a potent political moment. *1871*, McMullen's latest film, recounts the rise and fall of the Paris Commune, that brief, utopian moment following the Franco-Prussian War when a popular municipal government ruled Paris. The film opens in the French capital, the center of late-nineteenth-century European debauchery. France enters an ill-advised war with Prussia which culminates in a siege of Paris. The imperial hegemony begins to crumble, and the Communards seize the day. The subsequent downfall of the Commune is a story of naive, undisciplined political energy. The Communards have our sympathy, but they are inexperienced, easily inflamed, and easily derailed. They lose their opportunity to prepare a defense against the inevitable reassertion of the empire, while the French army reorganizes and marches to Paris to restore order. Civil war breaks out. Executions bloody the streets and tens of thousands of people die.

"The concept of the film was to explore how people respond to political crisis," explains McMullen. Most of the film takes place inside a Parisian theater. The theater audience symbolically represents "the people." As political circumstances change on stage, the audience is transformed from debauched spectators to a revolutionary mob to senseless martyrs for the cause.



McMullen's newest film, *1871*, is set during the height of the Second Empire in France. That time, says the director, "has a lot of resonances with the Thatcher period in Britain. It was a period of complete complacency, with a lot of new and easy fortunes being made."

Courtesy Film Four International

McMullen's films aren't very well known in the US, where screenings have been infrequent. But they are highly regarded elsewhere, having been presented at festivals from Cannes to Moscow. Ironically, his first retrospective was held in the US, at this year's AFI Los Angeles Film Festival (formerly Filmex).

In the last five years, McMullen has produced three historical features that examine key political episodes from recent history: the aftermath of the Russian Revolution and the rise of fascism (*Zina*, 1985), the partition of India and Pakistan (*Partition*, 1987), and the Paris Commune (*1871*, 1990). The films are searching investigations of opportunities seized during those historical moments when the walls around political power structures were



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McMullen not only exposes the weakness of the Communards' strategy, but also, he notes, "the fickleness of political conviction."

McMullen's previous film, *Partition*, was produced with \$750,000 from Channel Four. The film commemorates the fortieth anniversary of the withdrawal of the British from India, which led to the partition of India and Pakistan. A million people died in the massive migrations and religious upheaval set off by independence. *Partition* is the story of an imperial power caught in an inelegant effort to withdraw from its colony and mediate between two parties—Muslims on one side, Hindus and Sikhs on the other—whose rivalry and resentments had been suppressed by the dominating British colonial presence.

*Partition* is based on an allegorical short story, set in a lunatic asylum, by the Urdu writer Saadat Hasan Manto. The patients (Hindus and Sikhs) are due to be moved from Lahore in Pakistan to India, and "the loonies," as they're called, don't want to go. In contrast, the "sane" people—British officials and Indian bureaucrats—engage in diplomatic powerplays that senselessly move people from their ancestral homelands.

In *Partition*, power is exercised at a dispassionate distance. McMullen creates moments in which symbolic political dialogue takes place. In scene after scene, the political leadership coolly ruminates about power. Power, they agree, is about seeing or being seen. It is about looking out over the balcony while people die in the streets below. McMullen's explains that in an effort to bridge seeing and being seen, action and consequence, he double-cast roles. "The Indian civil servants responsible for the political decisions also play the lunatics who pay the consequences for them."

The first of McMullen's historical films, *Zina*, chronicles the relationship of Trotsky with his daughter Zina and the rise of fascism in Europe. The film is set in 1929, when Trotsky is living in exile on the Turkish island of Prinkipo. Zina lives in Berlin where she is in psychoanalysis. The film is organized around four compressed sessions of her analysis.

During one session, Zina describes herself self-deprecatingly as the good-for-nothing daughter of the most important figure of her time. She lives in the shadow of her father, and her desperate need for his attention jeopardizes his safety. Moves to exclude her from Trotsky's inner circle only feed her paranoia. *Zina* pays equal respect to the calamity and torment of the film's eponymous heroine and to the needs and suffering of the people with whom Trotsky concerns himself.

McMullen's interest in Trotsky stems in part from his interest in the unconscious. "Like Trotsky, I take the unconscious seriously," he says. In *Zina*, the character Trotsky writes that art has to persuade the unconscious wishes of the people. McMullen concurs, stating, "Art has to build the bridge." Applying the lesson in every shot, he asks himself, "What are the evocational elements? What will get picked up without getting spoken?" The process results in films richly textured with



extralinguistic elements, material he calls the "second register." "In *Zina* we used fragments of 'L'Internationale,' Nazi songs, dance bands. People don't notice, but it's there." Other second register material comes from newsreels, quotes, and dramatic emphasis on the underlying ritual content of an action or scene. The second register acts as a set of subtexts that set off sparks in the unconscious.

Both human and political dramas in McMullen's films are developed with a respect for the unconscious as well as the conscious intentions of the characters—and the discrepancy between them. McMullen abjures neat, tidy, cause-and-effect histories. Political revolutions don't happen the way their advocates intend. McMullen's histories are appropriately messy and out of control.

*Zina* concludes with the closing chorus from *Antigone*: "Great words of prideful men are ever punished with great blows, and, in old age, teach the chastened to be wise." A self-acknowledged optimist, McMullen echoes the lyric. "We learn from history," he says. "Each revolution leaves a residue. The Russian Revolution owes debts to the Paris Commune." Likewise, McMullen's films have a cumulative effect, laying lesson upon lesson until, he says, "at long last we will learn wisdom."

Barbara Osborn writes frequently for *The Independent* about film and video in Los Angeles.



Ken McMullen (right) coaches the psychiatrist (Ian McKellen) and his patient, Trotsky's daughter Zina (Domiziana Giordano) during production of his innovative feature *Zina*.

Courtesy Film Forum

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Chronicling the hopes, trials, and tribulations of independent filmmakers, **The Heck with Hollywood!** follows three directors over a four-year period as they struggle to finish and find distribution for their low-budget features. Hailed by *Variety* as "the surprise hit" of this year's Berlin Film Festival market, the 57-minute documentary was produced and directed by Doug Block in association with WGBH-Boston. The film features Jennifer Fox, whose *Beirut: The Last Home Movie* was named best documentary at the 1988 US Film Festival; Gerry Cook, who sold his house and business to finance the low-budget comedy *Only a Buck*; and Ted Lichtenheld, who filmed the heartland drama *Personal Foul* in his economically depressed hometown of Rockford, Illinois. **The Heck with Hollywood!**: Doug Block, Blockbusters, 180 Varick St., 8th fl., New York, NY 10014; (212) 727-8319; fax: (212) 727-2797.

During the first half of the century, there were over 100 shvitzbud, or traditional Russian steambaths, in New York City. Today there are less than 10 in all of North America. **The Shvitz (The Steambath)**, from the Yiddish word for sweat, is a one-hour 16mm documentary by Jonathan Berman that explores generations of urban Americans through the peculiar institution of the shvitz. Interweaving archival footage with material shot on location at Coney Island and in the surviving shvitzes of Manhattan and Los Angeles, *The Shvitz* tackles issues of emotional bonding, assimilation, and gentrification. The film is currently in postproduction and seeking completion funds.

Berman and sponsor, the New York Foundation for the Arts, are seeking tax-deductible contributions. *The Shvitz*: Jonathan Berman, 396 3rd Ave. #2S, New York, NY 10016; (212) 685-7166.

Does a bad economy inspire good art? The relationship between cultural production and economic hardship is the subject of a series of videotapes entitled **Hard Times and Culture**, by Juan Downey. The series subjectively documents periods in which economic hardship have coincided with intensified creative output in the fine arts, literature, and culture. Framed by references to contemporary New York City, part one: **Vienna 'fin-de-siècle'** is a 34-minute color film which focuses on the emergence of modernism and psychoanalysis during the decline of the Austro-Hungarian empire 100 years ago. *Vienna 'fin-de-siècle'* was exhibited at the Whitney Biennial.

**Vienna 'fin-de-siècle'**: Electronic Arts Intermix, 536 Broadway, 9th fl., New York, NY 10012; (212) 966-4605.

Emma is a Jew in Kiev and terrified of an imminent civil war. Shura, homeless since the Chernobyl disaster, lives in a tent city near the Kremlin. Genya, a young journalist in Moscow, depends on the black market for food, clothing, and housing since he lacks the necessary Moscow passport. **Kitchen Talk USSR**, directed and filmed by Heather MacDonald, is a glimpse of Soviet



The naked truth in Jonathan Berman's documentary *The Shvitz*, which explores urban America through the peculiar institution of the Russian bath.

Courtesy filmmaker

lives as they are revealed through conversations with a variety of Soviet people. The film was inspired by MacDonald's journey through the Soviet Union last year with the Showcase of American Documentary Film in the USSR. *Kitchen Talk USSR*: Filmmakers Library, 124 E. 40th St., New York, NY 10016; (212) 808-4980; fax: (212) 808-4983.

**Choreography for a Copy Machine (Photocopy Cha Cha)**, an animated short by Chel White, uses the photographic capabilities of a photocopying machine to generate sequential pictures of hands, faces, food, and sundry body parts. The 16mm color film blends the surreal with the absurd in a fast-paced collage of photocopy fetishism. Winner of the Best Animation award at the 1991 Ann Arbor Film Festival. *Choreography*: Chel White Films, Box 15266, Portland, OR

97215; (503) 235-9063.

Canadian videographer Marusia Bociurkiw has completed **Bodies in Trouble**, a video about the lesbian body under siege. Blending documentary footage of right-wing groups and gay-bashing police, newspaper clippings about violence against women, and explicit sexual imagery, *Bodies in Trouble* explores what women are up against when they come together between the sheets. Describing the humor, eroticism, and danger lesbians encounter in bars, bedrooms, and on the street, the video is both a call to action and a celebration of lesbian existence. *Bodies in Trouble*: US and Quebec: (514) 499-9840; elsewhere in Canada: (416) 863-9897.

**Broken Meat**, a nonfiction film by Pola Rapaport about the New York poet/writer Alan Granville, combines slow motion footage of the deserted margins of Manhattan with Granville's voiceover of his poetry. The 50-minute film uses black and white photography to evoke the New York of the 1950s, when Granville was a young man on his first slide toward schizophrenia and alcoholism. Scheduled as part of the Museum of Modern Art's Cineprobe series, *Broken Meat* is out of production. *Broken Meat*: Pola Rapaport, 307 Spring St., New York, NY 10013; (212) 582-6050, (212) 620-0029.

On December 3, 1984, the worst industrial accident in history occurred when a toxic gas known as methyl isocyanate (MIC) leaked from a Union Carbide pesticide plant in Bhopal, India. Meanwhile, in the "chemical valley" of central West Virginia, the only other Union Carbide plant manufacturing MIC was producing the chemical in a facility 10 times the size of that in Bhopal.

**Chemical Valley**, a new videotape by Mimi Pickering and Anne Lewis Johnson, begins with the events in Bhopal and the response in the Kanawha Valley, documenting over a five-year period one community's struggle to make socially accountable an industry that has all too often forced communities to choose between safety and jobs. *Chemical Valley*: Appalshop, 306 Madison St., Whitesburg, KY 41858; (800) 545-7467.

Fritz Feick's first classical music video, **Bulgare**, juxtaposes a Franz Schubert quintet with an edgy cinematic odyssey through the subterranean night world of New York City. *The River*, the first in a series of six hour-long classical music videos Feick plans to develop for broadcast and home video sales, is in production. *Bulgare*: Fritz Feick Films, 252 Mott St. #4R, New York, NY 10012; (212) 724-2800.

Tiyoweh, the Seneca word for stillness, refers



to a state of mind in which one can hear an inner voice of truth. **Tiyoweh: Pathway to Peace**, now in postproduction, is a one-hour video by Barbara Franceschi and Kurt Hall. It documents the teachings of Grandmother Twylah, a Seneca Native Elder, and Grandmother Kitty, a Lakota Native Elder. Taped at the Cattaraugus Indian Reservation in upstate New York during a Council of Elders meeting, the video demonstrates the profound veneration of Elders and the earth, which is a part of these Native American teachings, and the effect of the philosophy on people from all walks of life. **Tiyoweh:** Barbara Franceschi, Open Window Productions, 24 King St., #6, New York, NY 10014; (212) 675-4521; or (305) 665-6912.

Principal shooting continues for **The Life and Times of Hank Greenberg**, a documentary film by Aviva Kempner about the most famous Jewish ballplayer. The son of immigrant Jews, Greenberg played first base and outfield for the Detroit Tigers from 1933 to 1946 and outfield for the Pittsburgh Pirates in 1947. In 1938 he fell just two runs short of matching Babe Ruth's record of 60 home runs. Kempner is seeking anecdotes, letters, photographs, or film footage about immigrant children playing stickball or baseball in urban settings from the late twenties through the forties, as well as similar material from Greenberg's career as a player and manager. **The Life and Times of Hank Greenberg:** Aviva Kempner, Ciesla Foundation, 1707 Lanier Place NW, Washington, DC 20009; (202) 462-7528.

**Mirror on the Moon**, the first feature by visual artist Leandro Katz, follows four characters as they unravel the mystery surrounding the excavation of an ancient Mayan tablet. When Beatrice investigates a missing stela disrupted by suppression of a peasant rebellion, Julian becomes engrossed in her search and travels to meet her withdrawn and perverse father, Nicholas. Meanwhile Corrigan waits inside a warehouse of museum replicas, rehearsing the damaging truth he is about to reveal. The 100-minute 16mm color film was shot on location in New England, New York, Yucatán, and Copán, Honduras. **Mirror on the Moon** is out of production. Blue Horses Films, 225 Lafayette St., Suite 914, New York, NY 10012; (212) 431-0940; fax: (212) 334-6167.

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## Domestic

**AFI FEST-LOS ANGELES**, Apr. 9-23, CA. In 6th yr, invitational, noncompetitive fest presented by American Film Institute focuses on int'l cinema, incl. world & US premieres. Last yr 200 features, docs & shorts from 38 countries shown. This yr in new W. Hollywood cinema. Seminars & workshops. No entry fee. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Jan. 15 (features); Dec. 15 (shorts). Contact: Ken Wlaschin, AFI Fest, 2021 N. Western Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90027; (213) 856-7707; fax: (213) 462-4049.

**AMERICAN FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL**, May 28-30, IL. This yr at Chicago's Congress Hotel, one of oldest major competitive fests for nontheatrical film & video in US. In 34th yr, fest selects 450 from over 1,000 entries screened. Nat'l juries judge entries & award Blue & Red Ribbon awards in 100 cats. Blue Ribbon winners eligible for doc/short Academy Award nomination. Other awards incl. Emily (best of festival) & John Grierson award to 1st time director. Competition cats (which contain subcats) incl. shorts, arts & culture, humanities, world around us, concerns & controversies, children & young adults, instructional media, special competitions, film/video vanguard, feature, professional, health care professionals, home video, student. Distribs, producers, critics & buyers & programmers from universities, libraries, museums & businesses attend. Entrants incl. independent film/videomakers & distribs, corporate & gov't media depts, broadcast networks & students. Workshops, awards ceremonies & features market w/ materials from distributors, producers, publishers. Entries must be produced &/or released in US between Jan. 1, 1990 & Dec. 30, 1991. US rights should be avail. Entry fees based on length: \$50-155 w/ discounts for AFVA members. Formats: 16mm, 3/4", 1/2" (home video); preview on 16mm & 1/2". Deadline: Dec. 2 (submissions after Dec. 2 & before Jan. 3 pay \$25 penalty). Contact: Kathryn Osen, American Film & Video Festival, AFVA, 920 Barnsdale Rd, Suite 152, La Grange Park, IL 60525-1600; (708) 482-4000; fax: (708) 352-7528.

**ASIFA-EAST ANIMATED FILM AWARDS**, Jan. 30, NY. ASIFA, int'l society of animators founded in 1961, accepts amateur & student prods, sponsored works of specified lengths & nonsponsored work for fest held at Donnell Media Center this yr. Awards for direction, animation, design, concept, soundtrack & student. Work must be produced in last 3 yrs. Entry fees: \$5-30. Formats: 16mm, 3/4". Deadline: Jan. 2. Contact: Richard Rauh, 11 Admiral Lane, Norwalk, CT 06851; (203) 847-4740.

**ATLANTA FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL**, May, GA. Presented by media arts center Image, competitive fest, now in 16th yr, is dedicated to innovative, entertaining productions & boasts enthusiastic local audience. \$7,000 in cash & equipment awarded in dramatic, experimental, animated, doc, student & other cats. Small honorarium for exhibited work. Some 40 artists showcased, last yr 12 attended. Screenings at High Museum & Image. Extensive local press coverage. Entries must be completed after Jan. 1, 1989. Sponsored works (industrials, commercials, etc.) ineligible. Entry fee: \$25 indiv./nonprofit; \$40 distributor/for profit; add \$5 for foreign. Formats: 16mm, Super 8, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Jan. 3. Contact: Atlanta Film & Video Festival, 75 Bennett St., NW, Suite M-1, Atlanta, GA 30309; (404) 352-4254.

**CITY LORE FESTIVAL OF AMERICAN FILM AND VIDEO**, Mar., NY. In 6th yr, noncompetitive fest at New

**This month's festivals have been compiled by Kathryn Bowser, director of the FIVE Festival Bureau. Listings do not constitute an endorsement. Since some details change faster than we do, we recommend that you contact the festival for further information before sending prints or tapes. In order to improve our reliability and make this column more beneficial to independents, we encourage all film- and videomakers to contact FIVE Festival Bureau with their personal festival experiences, positive and negative.**

York University celebrates American folk cultural docs. Cats: traditional docs on Americans & their culture, expressions of community & identity. Special themes: food on film & genre benders (combining fiction & nonfiction; animation, etc.). Entry fee: \$10. Formats: 16mm, 3/4"; preview on 1/2". Deadline: Feb. 15. Contact: City Lore Festival of Film & Video, 72 E. 1st St., New York, NY 10003; (212) 529-1955; fax: (212) 529-5062.

**CLEVELAND INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, Mar. 26-Apr. 5, OH. Over 40 features & docs from 15 countries screened for audiences of 15,000. Premiere audiences estimated at 21,000. Program incl. independent films series of shorter works by young & student filmmakers. Entry fee: \$20. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette. Deadline: Dec. 31. Contact: David Wittkowsky, Cleveland Int'l Film Festival, 6200 SOM Center Rd C20, Cleveland, OH 44139; (216) 349-0270; fax: (216) 349-0210.

**MEDIAMIX UNITED STATES SUPER 8 FILM FESTIVAL**, Feb., NJ. Super 8 works eligible to compete for \$1,000 in prizes in fest at Rutgers Univ. Accepts animation, doc., experimental, fiction & personal. Entry fee: \$25. Format: Super 8. Deadline: Jan. 4. Contact: Mediamix US super 8 Festival, Rutgers Univ. Film Cop., Media Services, Kilmer Library, Ave. E., Piscataway, NJ 08855; (908) 932-8482.

**NEW DIRECTORS/NEW FILMS**, Mar., NY. Prestigious fest est. in 1972 surveys world cinema to capacity audiences at Museum of Modern Art. Dedicated to discovery of new & unrecognized narrative features, docs & shorts. 20-25 programs w/ entries from 15 countries last yr; no specific cats. Shorts programmed w/ features. Entries must be NY premieres. Cosponsored by MoMA's Dept. of Film & Film Society of Lincoln Center, which presents NY Film Festival. No entry fee; entrants pay shipping. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 3/4" & 1/2". Deadline: Jan. 6. Contact: New Directors/ New Films, Film Society of Lincoln Center, 70 Lincoln Center Plaza, New York, NY 10023-6595; (212) 875-5610; fax: (212) 875-5636.

**THIRD WAVE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL**, Feb. 21-25, TX. Invitational compilation of recent features & shorts by int'l women. Regional showcase open to film/video artists native to or working in AR, KS, LA, MO, NM, OK, CO, TX. Entries must be completed after Jan. 1, 1987. Under 60-min. features, docs, shorts accepted. No commercial, advertising, or industrial productions. Public symposia. Entry fee: \$10. Formats: 16mm, 3/4"; preview on 3/4". Deadline: Jan. 6. Showcase contact: Claudia Sperber, 3402 Randolph Rd., Austin, TX 78722; (512) 474-4337. Festival contact: Third Wave Women's Film & Video Festival, Women's Media Project, Box 49432, Austin, TX 78765; (512) 442-5760.

**US ENVIRONMENTAL FILM FESTIVAL**, Apr. 23-26, CO. Films & videos on environmental issues eligible for competition in third int'l fest, only one in US devoted solely to environmental works. Entries must be completed after Jan. 1, 1989. Cats: shorts, features, documentaries, fiction, young people's, experimental, broadcast journalism, nonprofit commercials, animation, music. Cash prizes in 7 cats & best of fest. Celebrities, media, environmental & scientific orgs participate. Fest sponsors debates, tributes, panel discussions & traveling circuit. Audiences approach 10,000. Out of 500 submissions last yr, 135 screened. Call for entry fee. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4"; preview on 1/2" only. Deadline: Jan. 6. Contact: Jeanne (Jan) Sauer, film coordinator, USEFF, 1026 West Colorado Ave., Colorado Springs, CO 80904; (719) 520-1952; fax: (719) 520-9157.

## Foreign

**BOMBAY INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL** for Documentary, Short and Animation Films, Feb. 1-7, India. Founded 1990 as one of few int'l fests solely for docs & shorts, this yr animation section added. Biennial fest invites directors as guests. 1st edition showed 240 films from 600 entries & 40 countries. incl. 23 US independents in competition & 9 in info section. Sections: competition, info, retro, spectrum India, market (35mm, 16mm & video screening facilities). Any film can register in market, regardless of production yr, incl. those in competition & info. sections. Competition films must be produced in preceding 2 yrs; previous 4 yrs for info section. Cats: nonfiction under & over 40 min., fiction under 60 min., best animated film. Awards Golden Conch & Rs. 250,000 in each cat; Int'l Jury Award, Rs. 100,000; Critics Award; IDPA Award to best 1st film. Certificates of participation to films in competition & info. Also sponsoring 1-min. animation contest (35mm, 16mm, 3/4", deadline Jan. 20) on fest motto: Move with Each Other... To Each Other Speak, awarding Rs. 100,000 (approx. \$4,000). Fest formats: 35mm, 16mm; pre-selection on cassette. Deadline: Dec. 15. Contact: Vijay Chandra, director, Bombay International Film Festival for Documentary & Short Films, Films Division, Film Bhavan, 24, Dr. Gopalrao Deshmukh Marg, Bombay 400 026, India; tel: 91 22 3864633; fax: 91 22 3860308.

**GOTEBORG FILM FESTIVAL**, Jan., Sweden. FIAPF-recognized, noncompetitive, 10-day fest now celebrating 15th yr, largest in Scandinavia. Last yr nearly 69,000 tickets sold for 220 films. Entries should be Swedish premieres. Entries of all lengths, formats & genres that "are consciousness expanding & promote understanding of people & issues" accepted. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on PAL 1/2". Deadline: Dec. 1. Contact: Goteborg Film Festival, Box 7079, S-402 32, Goteborg, Sweden; tel: 31 41 05 46; fax: 31 41 00 63.



**SINGAPORE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, Mar., Singapore. FIAPF-recognized invitational for features, shorts, docs & animation, now in 5th yr. Noncompetitive & competitive section for Asian cinema w/ award for best Asian feature. Open to 35mm & 16mm feature-length productions completed after Jan. 1, 1991. Must be Singapore premiere. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 8mm, 3/4". Deadline: Dec. 31. Contact: Singapore International Film Festival, 17A Cecil St., Singapore 0104; tel: 223 5109.

**TAMPERE INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL**, Mar. 4-8, Finland. One of largest Nordic short film fests, competitive fest now in 22nd yr. Screens shorts w/ human theme (no films against human values or encouraging hatred & discrimination). Programs 200 works w/ competition showing 85 films from 1,300 entries from 40 countries to audiences of 13,000 from 20 countries. Cats: animated, doc, fiction/experimental. Children's films accepted in any cat. Awards: Grand Prix (bronze statuette & \$6,500 for best film); best film in each cat. (statuette & cash); diplomas of merit; cash prizes. Competition entries must be under 35 min.; in doc. cat., 35-60 min. accepted. Must have 1st public screening after Jan. 1, 1991. Films shown at other int'l fests eligible. Also incl. special programs (e.g., animation retrospective). No entry fee. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette. Deadline: Jan. 15. Contact: Kirsi Kinnunen, executive director, Tampere Film Festival, Box 305, 33101 Tampere, Finland; tel: (358) 31 235681; fax: (358) 230121.

## AIVF REGIONAL CORRESPONDENTS

AIVF has a network of regional correspondents who can provide membership information, hold meetings, and aid recruitment in areas of the country outside New York City. AIVF members are urged to contact them about AIVF-related needs and problems, your activities, and other relevant information and news:

**Howard Aaron**, Northwest Film and Video Ctr., 1219 S.W. Park Ave., Portland, OR 97205; (503) 221-1156

**Cheryl Chisolm**, 2844 Engle Road, NW, Atlanta, GA 30318; (404) 792-2167

**Dee Davis**, Appalshop, 306 Whitesburg, KY 41858; (606) 633-0108

**Loni Ding**, 2335 Jones St., San Francisco, CA 94133; (415) 474-5132; 673-6428

**Dai Sil Kim-Gibson**, 1752 17th St., NW, Washington, DC 20009; (202) 232-6912

**Deanna Morse**, School of Communication, Grand Valley State Univ., Allendale, MI 49401; (616) 895-3101

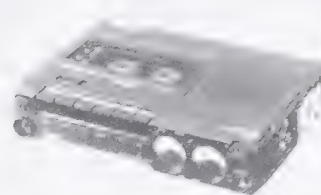
**Lourdes Portillo**, 981 Esmeralda St., San Francisco, CA 94110; (415) 824-5850

**Robin Reidy**, 911 Meda Arts Center, 117 Yale Ave. N., Seattle, WA 98109; (206) 682-6552

**Bart Weiss**, 1611 Rio Vista Dr., Dallas, TX 75208; (214) 948-7300

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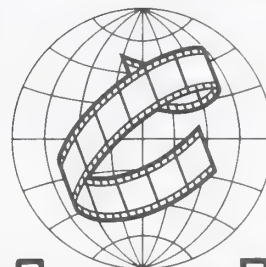
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**PROPOSALS SOUGHT** for video, audio & art & tech. workshops for Bronx jr. high & high schools students. 6-12 session collaborative productions. Send project description, equip. needs & budget to: Parabola Arts Foundation, 131 Spring St. #4EF, New York, NY 10012; (212) 219-9695.

**FINANCIAL SUPPORT SOUGHT** for prod of 25-min. historical doc on renowned gynecologist for Lifetime Medical Television. Prod costs \$1,000-\$2,500/min. Contact: Deep South Medical Film Productions, 2810 Andrew Ave., Pascagoula, MS 39567; (601) 762-7701.

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**Each entry in the Classifieds column has a 250 character limit & costs \$20 per issue. Ads exceeding this length will be edited. Payment must be made at the time of submission. Anyone wishing to run a classified more than once must pay for each insertion & indicate the number of insertions on the submitted copy. Each classified must be typed, double-spaced & worded exactly as it should appear. Deadlines are the 8th of each month, two months prior to the cover date (e.g. November 8 for the January/February issue). Make check or money order—no cash, please—payable to FIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th floor, New York, NY 10012.**

**DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** avail. for dramatic 16 or 35mm productions of any length. Credits include *Metropolitan*. Call to see my reel. John Thomas (201) 783-7360.

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# The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers

When you join the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, you're doing something for yourself—and for others. Membership entitles you to a wide range of benefits. Plus, it connects you with a national network of independent producers. Adding your voice helps us all. The stronger AIVF is, the more we can act as advocate for the interests of independents like yourself—inside the corridors of Washington, with the press, and with others who affect our livelihoods.

## 8 Benefits of Membership

### THE INDEPENDENT

Membership provides you with a year's subscription to *The Independent*. Published 10 times a year, the magazine is a vital source of information about the independent media field. Each issue helps you get down to business with festival listings, funding deadlines, exhibition venues, and more. Plus, you'll find thought-provoking features, coverage of the field's news, and regular columns on business, technical, and legal matters.

### THE FESTIVAL BUREAU

AIVF maintains up-to-date information on over 650 national and international festivals, and can help you determine which are right for your film or video.

### Tolson Service

AIVF works directly with many foreign festivals, in some cases collecting and shipping tapes or prints overseas, in other cases serving as the U.S. host to visiting festival directors who come to review work.

### Tape Library

Members can house copies of their work in the AIVF tape library for screening by visiting festival programmers. Or make your own special screening arrangements with AIVF.

### INFORMATION SERVICES

#### Distribution

By person or over the phone, AIVF can provide information about distributors and the kinds of films, tapes, and markets in which they specialize.

### AIVF's Member Library

Our library houses information on distributors, funders, and exhibitors, as well as sample contracts, funding applications, budgets, and other matters.

### SEMINARS

Our seminars explore current business, aesthetic, legal, and technical topics, giving independent producers a valuable forum to discuss relevant issues.

### BOOKS AND TAPES

AIVF has the largest mail order catalog of media books and audiotaped seminars in the U.S. Our list covers all aspects of film and video production. And we're constantly updating our titles, so independents everywhere have access to the latest media information. We also publish a growing list of our own titles, covering festivals, distribution, and foreign and domestic production resource guides.

*continued*

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## INSURANCE

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A production insurance plan, tailor-made for AIVF members and covering public liability, faulty film and tape, equipment, sets, scenery, props, and extra expense, is available, as well as an errors and omissions policy with unbeatable rates.

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Reduced rates for dental coverage are available to NYC and Boston-area members.

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National offers a 10-20 percent discount to AIVF members. Write for the AIVF authorization number.

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*David Shepherd, director*

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The FIVE Festival Bureau has established a tape library of members' current works to expedite screenings for upcoming film and video festivals. Members interested in depositing work in the library should contact: Kathryn Bowser, Festival Bureau director, FIVE, 625 Broadway, 9th floor, New York, NY 10012, (212) 473-3400. 1/2" and 3/4" tapes will be accepted.

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**MEDIA ALLIANCE** annual meeting & conference, Nov. 1, New York University. Focus on funding crisis w/in NYS arts community, w/ sessions on organizational survival tactics, networking & advocacy in media arts; discussions on access to field, crosscultural exchange, media arts education & video preservation; reports from members meetings & multicultural coalition. Fee: \$30 Media Alliance members/\$40 nonmembers or \$10 w/ member. Advance registration deadline: Oct. 25. Contact: Rebecca Schreiber, Media Alliance, c/o WNET, 356 W. 58th St., New York, NY 10019; (212) 569-2919.

**MEDIA NETWORK** social issue media conference (RePackaging Paradise: Media Strategies for a New World), Nov. 23-24, Hunter College. Panels, screenings & workshops on education, organizing, prod. & distrib. Focus on dominant & alternative representations of America & American identity w/ref. to quincennial. Registration: \$40/\$30 Media Network members & Hunter students. \$50 conference fee incl. Media Network membership (\$25). Contact: Kelly Anderson, Media Network, 39 W. 14th St., Suite 403, New York, NY 10011; (212) 929-2663.

## Films ■ Tapes Wanted

**ART MAGGOT HYSTERIA**, 30-min. video art party on Century Cable in Los Angeles, wants new work w/ political/social/religious dogma. Send 3/4" tapes to: Jonathon X, Box 3898, Hollywood, CA 90078; (213) 665-0171.

**DEEP DISH TV** seeks proposals & tapes w/ critical perspective on quincennial for 1992 season, incl. works by & about indigenous people; on official vs. unofficial history; on relationship btw. North & South America; grassroots performances, teach-ins, direct action, etc. Any style, format, genre. Deadlines: Dec. 1, Apr. 1, description of completed tape; Jan. 2, project proposal from collaborating org. for DDTV distribution; Jan. 15, program on specific theme from coordinating producer. Contact: Deep Dish TV, programming director, 339 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10012; (212) 473-8933; fax: (212) 420-8223.

**DONNELL MEDIA CENTER** seeks proposals for silent video installation in library display window. NYSCA honorarium & partial expenses. Prior work welcome. Deadline 1/92. Contact: M. Desthus/D. Sarlin, Donnell Media Center, 20 W. 53rd St., New York, NY 10019.

**HUNGARIAN TELEVISION** looking for off-beat work on unusual subjects for 30 min. & 1-hr programs for new series. Send descriptions to: Andras Kepes, senior producer, Magyar Televizio, 1810 Budapest, Hungary; tel: 36 1 153 3200.

**IMAGE UNION** seeks doc., animation, narrative, comedy & experimental tapes 25 min. & under for broadcast. Pays \$25/min. Send 3/4" tapes to: Jamie Ceaser, WTTW, 5400 N. St. Louis Ave., Chicago, IL 60625; (312) 583-5000.

**INDEPENDENT FOCUS**, WNET's series of US ind. work, seeks narrative, doc, animation & experimental

**Notices are listed free of charge. AIVF members receive first priority; others are included as space permits. The Independent reserves the right to edit for length. Deadlines for Notices will be respected. These are the 8th of the month, two months prior to cover date (e.g., November 8 for the January/February issue). Send to: Independent Notices, FIVE, 625 Broadway, 9th fl., New York, NY 10012.**

work 2 hrs & under for 15th season. Acquisition fees based on \$55/min. for 3 releases in 3 yrs. NY-area broadcast premiere required. Deadline: Nov. 1. For entry form contact: Cara Mertes, WNET, 356 W. 58th St., New York, NY 10019; (212) 560-2917.

**LESBIANS IN THE CREATIVE ARTS** seeks video w/ lesbian content for public show & possible distribution. Any length, genre, style, or cassette format. For guidelines contact: Video, Suite 443, 496A Hudson St., New York, NY 10014.

**LIVE OAK MEDIA** accepting narrative, doc. & experimental video for possible exhibition. Send tape, resumé & statement w/ \$5 return postage. Deadlines: Dec. 1, Mar. 1. Contact: Bob Doyle, LiveOakMedia, 847 S. Goodman St., Rochester, NY 14620.

**INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY VIDEO FESTIVAL**, 5-hr Mar. 8 cablecast produced by Boston public access groups, seeks tapes in all formats, genres & languages on women and discovery & 1-min. interviews w/ women on same theme. Deadline: Dec. 1, US; Jan. 1, int'l. Send tape w/ entry form, SASE. Contact: International Women's Day Video Festival, Box 390439, Cambridge, MA 02239; (617) 628-8826.

**PCTV** cable network seeks entries for *Global Africa*, Black history month int'l film/video series & festival. Entries meeting standards be to cablecast in San Francisco Bay area & screened at Oakland Museum. Entry fee: \$20. Deadline: Nov. 15. Send 3/4" or VHS exhibition quality tapes & entry form to: Peralta Colleges Television Network, Global Africa, 900 Fallon St., 9th fl., Oakland, CA 94604; (415) 464-3253.

**REEL TIME**, monthly series at PS 122, seeks new experimental & doc 16mm & super 8 films. Send VHS preview tape to: Jim Brown, Reel Time, Performance Space 122, 150 1st Ave., New York, NY 10009; (212) 477-5288.

**THE 90's** seeks short films, tapes & excerpts from longer work for nat'l broadcast Jan.-Mar. in 6-program series. Upcoming themes & deadlines: guns & violence, Nov. 11; rural America, Nov. 21, open subjects (last 2 programs). On-going subjects: earth/environment, TV & media, global issues, drugs, politics, kids. All genres & styles. Pays \$150/min. Send 3/4", hi-8, 8mm, or VHS

tape w/info & SASE to: The 90's, 400 N. Michigan Ave. #1608, Chicago, IL 60611; (312) 321-9321; fax: (312) 321-9323.

## Publications

**BAN CENSORSHIP**: People for the American Way's 30-postcard booklet w/anti-censorship messages pre-addressed to policymakers, incl. legislators, TV execs, textbook companies. \$4.95 plus shipping & handling. Orders: (800) 365-3453.

**FOOTAGE 91** now avail. Supplement to *Footage 89*, guide to North American film & video sources, w/ 1,740 entries & subject index. For both volumes: \$120 (foreign postage additional). CD-ROM version for Macintosh Plus w/ 35 additional databases: \$204.95. Contact: *Footage 91*, Prelinger Assoc., 430 W. 14th St., Rm. 206, New York, NY 10014; (800) 243-2252; fax: (212) 691-8347.

**FOUNDATION CENTER** *Foundation Fundamentals: Guide for Grantseekers*: 4th edition of comprehensive guide to fundraising for nonprofits now avail. w/ new info on corporate grantmaking. \$19.95 + \$4.50 shipping & handling. Also new *Grant Guide* for Film, Media & Communications. \$55 + \$4.50 shipping & handling. Contact: Foundation Center, 79 5th Ave., New York, NY 10003-3050; (800) 424-9836, (212) 620-4230; fax: (212) 807-3677.

**FREE MONEY FOR PEOPLE IN THE ARTS**, by Laurie Blum, incl. general, regional, fiscal sponsorship & federal agency listings. \$9.95. Contact: Collier Books, 866 3rd Ave., New York, NY 10022.

**MONEY FOR FILM & VIDEO ARTISTS** lists 190 sources of grants, fellowships, residencies, equipment access & technical assistance. Indexed by region, medium & format plus type of support. \$14.95 + \$4 shipping & handling. Contact: American Council for the Arts Books, Dept 25, 1285 Ave. of the Americas, 3rd fl., Area M, New York, NY 10019; (800) 321-4510.

**NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES'** *Overview of Endowment Programs* describes 30 NEH funding opportunities w/ deadlines, appl. procedures, state humanities council addresses. Free. Contact: NEH *Overview*, Rm. 406, 1100 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20506; (202) 786-0438.

**STUDENT MEDIA INTERNSHIP GUIDE** lists 170 contacts for inquiring about internships & jobs in TV, radio, film & music prod. Updated fall, spring & summer. \$14.95; 20% AIVF member discount. Contact: Donald Iarussi, Box 190232, Brooklyn, NY 11219; (718) 853-3025.

**WHO FUNDS PTV?** *Producer's Guide to Public Television Funding* avail. free from Corporation for Public Broadcasting, 901 E St., NW, Washington, DC 20004-2006; (202) 879-9600.

## Opportunities ■ Gigs

**AIDSFILMS** seeks writers, directors, production assistants & actors for dramatic film by, for & about African American men. Send letters, resumé & related materials to: AIDSFILMS, 50 W. 34th St., Suite 6B6, New York, NY 10001.

**ASSISTANT DIRECTORS** Training Program, sponsored by Directors Guild of America & Alliance of Motion Picture & Television Producers, provides 400 days paid



on-job training & seminars. Deadline: Jan. 11. For appl. write: 14144 Ventura Blvd., Suite 225, Sherman Oaks, CA 91423.

**FILM/VIDEO ARTS** internships. Minimum 6-mo. commitment, 15 hrs/wk work in exch. for free media classes, access to equip. & facilities. Minorities strongly encouraged. Appls received at all times. Contact: Angie Cohn, intern coordinator, F/VA, 817 Broadway, New York, NY 10003-4797; (212) 673-9361.

## Resources ■ Funds

**CPB MUSIC PROGRAM SOLICITATION:** CPB's Program Fund accepting proposals for new primetime, nat'l package of music programs targeting 35 to 49-yr-olds. Women, minorities & coproductions between public TV stations & ind. producers encouraged. Producers must have previously produced 1-hr music program. Deadline: Nov. 8. Contact: Charles Deaton, project coordinator, Corporation for Public Broadcasting, 901 E St. NW, Washington, DC 20004; (202) 879-9740.

**EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION CENTER,** Owego, NY, accepting appls from US artists for 5-day residency in video image processing, incl. Amiga computer. Send resumé & project description & select 5-day period w/ alternate dates from Feb. through June. New applicants should send videotape of recent work. Deadline: Dec. 15. NYSCA supported Electronic Arts Grants Program, w/ NYSCA support, provides funds to NYS nonprofits for exhibition of video, audio & electronic art. Support for artists fees, rentals & installations. Projects receiving NYSCA funds should determine eligibility. Appls accepted anytime & reviewed monthly. Contact: Sherry Miller Hocking, program director, Electronic Arts Grants Program, Experimental Television Center, 180 Front St., Owego, NY 13827; (607) 687-4341.

**NATIVE VOICES** Public TV Workshop accepting proposals for 2 half-hr cultural affairs programs by & for Montana Native Americans. Contact: Daniel Hart, executive director, Native Voices Public Television Workshop, Dept. of Film & TV, Montana State University, Bozeman, MT 59717; (406) 994-6223.

**OUT FUND,** Funding Exchange Project, accepts proposals for work contributing to gay/lesbian liberation. For organization promos, training, or workshop videos, apply directly to Out. Other film & video projects should be sent to Paul Robeson Fund first. Contact: Out Fund, Funding Exchange, 666 Broadway, # 500, New York, NY 10012; (212) 529-5300.

**PAUL ROBESON FUND** for independent media awards preproduction or distribution grants to film & video artists addressing critical social issues. Women, gay men & lesbians, people of color, physically challenged & artists utilizing alternative forms of social issue doc encouraged. Deadline: Dec. 1. Contact: Funding Exchange, 666 Broadway, #500, New York, NY 10012; (212) 529-5300.

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# OPPORTUNITIES KNOCK

## Coproduction Possibilities with Japan and Britain

KATHRYN BOWSER

**AIVF Administrative Director**

In June the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's Office of International Activities sponsored a conference in London in association with Britain's Independent Programme Producers Association (IPPA) to enable representatives of US independent media organizations to meet with their British counterparts. Representing the United States were James Yee (National Asian American Telecommunications Association), Marc Weiss (*P.O.V.*), Gail Silva (Film Arts Foundation), Sandy Mandelberger (Independent Feature Project), and myself. As the Association for Independent Video and Filmmakers' delegate, I wanted to learn about British producers' approaches to common problems and to develop contacts that would benefit our membership, particularly in the areas of coproduction and television broadcast.

The five-day conference was a good opportunity to study the structure of IPPA, AIVF's counterpart trade association. In turn, we provided information about our various organizations which may help those UK producers developing projects for coproduction or distribution in the US. During the week we had formal meetings with the major British media organizations and participated in a panel discussion before an audience of 50 producers that sharply illuminated the different professional contexts for US and UK producers, specifically the overwhelming dominance of broadcasting in Britain relative to theatrical exhibition and other distribution outlets.

The following summaries of British media organizations are intended to provide an introduction to production in Britain. All of these organizations expressed an openness to US/UK coproductions. More detailed information about opportunities for US independents considering an international relationship is available through AIVF.

### PRODUCERS ALLIANCE FOR CINEMA AND TELEVISION

At the time of our meeting, the Producers Association (TPA) and IPPA were in the process of formalizing a merger into a single organization, the Producers Alliance for Cinema and Television (PACT). In the future, PACT will represent a majority of Britain's producers and ancillary groups, such as financing agencies, production facilities, and so on.

Traditionally, TPA has provided numerous trade association-related services, including representation of producers at government and industry levels, negotiation of trade union agreements, information, seminars, publications, screenings, and representation at international festivals and markets.

IPPA serves a similar function, though its primary activity is the negotiation of agreements with unions and terms of trade with broadcasters. IPPA worked on the campaign to secure 25 percent of UK television programming for independent producers and negotiated with the BBC and the Independent Television Commission (ITV) to establish guidelines for the agreement's enactment. IPPA's publication *Co-Production Europe* is an invaluable resource for US independents seeking relationships with European partners. Its membership directory is also a valuable resource for producers seeking British partners. The Producers Association, Paramount House, 162-170 Wardour St., London W1V 4LA; tel: 071 437 7700, fax: 071 734 4564. IPPA, 50-51 Berwick St., London W1A 4RD; tel: 071 439 7034, fax: 071 494 2700.

**CHANNEL FOUR**  
The nine-year-old Channel Four has the unusual mandate to commission programs from independent producers as its main source of programming and to cater specifically to multicultural and underserved audiences. Currently, Channel Four is trying to expand programming boundaries to include more US independents, visually experimental programs, Third World productions, and polemical documentaries. Channel Four Television Company, 60 Charlotte St., London W1P 2AX; tel: 071 631 4444, fax: 071 637 4872.

### ARTS COUNCIL TELEVISION

Newly established by the Arts Council to increase public access to the arts, Arts Council Television is an arts program financing company that directly supports production and distribution of documentaries on art-related subjects. In addition, its Artists' Film and Video Committee supports production, promotion, and exhibition of experimental, innovative, and avant-garde film and video. It is also interested in providing production opportunities for new talent working on black arts subjects through its Black Arts Video Project. Arts Council, 14 Great Peter St., London SW1 3NQ; tel: 071 333 0100, fax: 071 973 6590.

### BBC

British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) officials indicated that coproduction might take the form of BBC investment in exchange for certain rights and editorial input. They suggested that foreign producers have local support or a local angle to make financing more viable. Alternate methods of project support (e.g., providing facilities or crew) might also be available. BBC, Wood Lane, London W12 7RJ; tel: 081 743 8000.

**BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE**  
Committed to innovative and specialized theatrical works, BFI Productions (originally called the Experimental Film Fund) was set up to provide small cash grants for production. BFI produces short films and low-budget features through its New Directors program, which funds work in 16mm, 8mm, and video. Between \$10,000 to \$54,000 is available for experimental, narrative, and some documentary productions.

### BRITISH SCREEN

BFI Productions also supports documentary, fiction, and animation projects considered to be innovative in form, content, cultural perspective, or style, particularly works by women and people of color. Monies for development, research, and production of films, videos, or pilots, equipment acquisition, and projects related to the development of regional film production is also available through BFI. BFI Production Projects, 29 Rathbone St., London W1P 1AG.

**BRITISH SCREEN**  
British Screen finances new, commercially viable UK features intended for theatrical release. Over the last four years, British Screen has invested \$39-million in 44 British productions. It is funded by government grants (through a theater levy) and private shareholders such as Channel Four, Canon, Granada, Rank, and Pathé. The bulk of its fund, which amounts to \$4-million per year, comes from returns on its investments.

### BRITISH SCREEN

British Screen will provide as much as one-third of a project's financing (up to \$1-million) in the form of a loan. It has also dedicated funds to script development, with a mandate to support new British talent who would not otherwise have production opportunities. Screenplay loans, development loans, and preparation loans are also available. British Screen Finance, 37-39 Oxford St., London W1R 1RE; tel: 071 434 0291, fax: 071 434 9933.

**FIRST FILM FOUNDATION**  
A new initiative, First Film Foundation was recently created to increase opportunities for new and young filmmakers and writers producing low-budget features, television dramas, and documentaries. In the last couple of years, about 3,000 proposals have been reviewed and about 50



projects are being worked on at any one time. An excellent model for the US, First Film provides much more than funding, reaching out to provide mentoring and support for new talent.

Primarily a development house designed to help producers find commissions, First Film offers guidance in a film's early developmental stages. It recommends projects to companies and helps locate experienced producers and writers who donate their time. The staff actively seeks projects, traveling to short film festivals to scout new talent. During our meeting the foundation staff raised the possibility of establishing a First Film Foundation office in New York City, perhaps in Tribeca, to work with independent producers in this country. First Film Foundation, Canalot Production Studios, 222 Kensal Road, London W10 5BN; tel: 081 969 5195, fax: 081 960 6302.

#### LONI DING

#### AIVF Board of Directors

On July 14 six Japanese and six US public television producers met in Washington, D.C. for a groundbreaking series of screenings and discussions designed to improve program coproduction between Japanese and US public television producers. The five-day series of in-depth seminars and screenings was sponsored and hosted by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's Office of International Activities in cooperation with Japan's public broadcasting corporation, Nippon Hoso Kyokai (NHK). The culmination of several years of sensitive pursuit by the Office of International Activities' executive director David Stewart and program officer Susan Rumberg, the meeting offered an opportunity for participants to view one another's work, discuss cultural differences and production problems encountered in past collaborations, and explore the future of U.S.-Japanese coproduction.

The meeting represents an important opportunity to regularize programming exchanges between Japan and the US, and a significant opening for independent and public television producers. As one of the world's largest broadcasting systems, NHK is financed by annual user's fees of 360-400 billion yen (US\$2.7- to \$2.9-billion) and employs 15,000 workers, including 2,000 full-time producers and directors. NHK's mandate to pursue coproduction is economic as well as cultural. Despite its affluence, in order to grow NHK must find financial partners to mount major productions otherwise deemed too expensive. NHK producers also want to learn new techniques and perspectives in order to create programs that will find a place on the global market and diversify NHK's revenue sources internationally.

NHK sent six participants and two observers to the conference who will be responsible in future

CONTINUED ON PAGE 44

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## MEMBERABILIA

Congratulations to AIVF members cited as winners in the **Hometown USA Video Festival**, a project of the National Federation of Local Cable Programmers: Don Iarussi, Dave Gordon, Sheldon Gleisser, Eduardo Lopez, Ben Davis, Steve Pierce, John Landis, Laurel Greenberg, Linda Price, Christopher Pitts, Lee Murray, Denise Zaccardi, and Jill Petzall. Kentucky-based filmmaker Andy Garrison's *Fat Monroe* won Best Narrative at the **Big Muddy Film Festival** and a Silver Apple at the **National Educational Film and Video Festival**.

Receiving **Great Lakes Regional Fellowships** were midwestern members Peter Allison, *Although Our Fields Are Streets*; Raid Bahhur and Tom Hayes, *River of Courage*; Annette Barbier, *Parvati, Hopefully*; Zeinabu Davis, *A Powerful Thang*; Carol Jacobsen, *They'll Find You Guilty*; Joel Santaquilani, *Andiamo*; Carrie Oviatt and Michelle Crenshaw, *The Real Fish Story*; Dalida Maria Benfield, *Canal Zone*; Cade Bursell, *The Crossing*; Terrance Doran, *The Beast of Busco*; Shuli Eshel, *Women Making Choices: Marva Jolly*; Cyndi Moran, *20th Century*; Cusi Pacilio, *Creation of Destiny*; and David Simpson, *A Split in the Tracks*.

## PROGRAM NOTES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 43

for advancing relations between Japanese and US public programming. They are Takashi Inoue, NHK's chief producer of cultural programs; Fumihiko Ninomiya, executive producer of NHK specials and producer of *Mini-Dragons*, a coproduction with Maryland PTV; Shin-ichi Kobayashi, producer in the coproduction programming department and a specialist in drama; Yoshiaki Kiuchi, executive producer and specialist in science documentaries and entertainment; Tokuzou Ohi, executive producer and specialist in culture, arts, and history; and Tamotsu Kameyama, manager executive producer and specialist in preschool and children's programs. Two high-level observers from NHK also attended: Eisuke Yoshitani, managing director of NHK's Communications Training Institute, and Akiyoshi Kobayashi, researcher in chief at NHK's Broadcast Culture Research Institute and the principal advocate for the network's participation in the seminar.

I was the sole independent producer invited to participate in the conference. Other US representatives selected by CPB's Office of International Affairs included Leo Eaton of Maryland PTV; William Grant, executive director of the WGBH-produced science series *Nova*; Sylvia Komatsu of KERA-Dallas; Gerald Richman of KTCA-Minneapolis; and Barry Stoner of KCTS-Seattle, whose *Asia Now* weekly news magazine is coproduced with NHK. The US observers were Burnell Clark of KCTS and chair of the US Public Television

Congrats to **New York Council on the Humanities** production grant recipients: Liz Leshin and Peng Xiaolin, *Between Earth and Sky*; Katherine Kline, *A Troop of Tomboys*; James McGowan, *First Defense*; Janet Forman, *Opera in China*; and Stuart Math and Kerry Michaels, *Watch the Closing Doors*. Pola Rapaport's *Broken Meat* received the Critics' Prize at the **Leningrad International Non-Feature Film Festival** and third prize at the **International Documentary Film Festival**, Amsterdam. Terrance Doran was awarded a Master Fellowship in Media Arts from the **Indiana Arts Commission**. Ken Burns received the **Charles Frankel Prize** from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Congratulations to the following recipients of **Southeast Film and Video Fellowships**: Callie Warner, *Wandering in My Soul*; Doug Loggins, *The Pasaquoyan*; Gayla Jamison, *Scraps of Life*;

International Consortium; Peggy Zapple of WQED-Pittsburgh; and Webster Nolan of Hawaii's East-West Center.

Frank and thorough roundtable discussions expertly guided by veteran Japan consultant Peter Grilli were simultaneously translated and alternated with screenings of participants' work. A recurrent theme was Japanese concern that their participation in joint ventures not be limited to footing the bill while US and British directors dictate creative and production processes. NHK producers also questioned the predominant use of English in coproductions.

Occasionally discussion of presumed differences revealed common ground. In one instance, NHK producers raised the issue of *ma*—a Japanese word that refers to open spacing in a film which allows the viewer time to reflect. It was a quality they thought US programs notably lacked. In response, KERA's Komatsu showed her quiet documentary on prehistoric cave drawings in Texas, and Richman showed *The Crossing*, a KTCA-sponsored film about a crew on a grain ship travelling from Minnesota to Holland. Against a background of waves and endless horizons, crew members talk about loneliness on the barge and the knowledge born of solitude that one is "obliged to be human." When the films were over, the Japanese said they thought US producers had *ma*, too, and expressed interest in acquiring the programs for NHK.

The most significant proposal came from Ninomiya, who broached the possibility of NHK broadcasting a weekly *PBS Hour* of PBS-pro-

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Joseph Murphy, *Art Saves Lives*; Harriette Yahr, *The Burgeoning of Rodney McLane*; Chris Farina, *West Main Street*; C.E. Courtney, *Nervous White Boy*; and Walter Brock.

duced programs. His offer, however, appeared contingent on PBS hosting a similar *NHK Hour*. There was no PBS representative at the conference to respond to the offer, but Gerald Richman of KTCA offered to start the ball rolling with an informal exchange of programming between his station and NHK.

Ninomiya's proposal reflects a desire to regularize exposure to each others' works and a significant opportunity for independent producers. Akiyoshi Kobayashi spoke of NHK's need for more "software" to run on their four channels and their assessment that program acquisition is cheaper than program production.

NHK colleagues introduced US participants to the Japanese value of *nemawashi*, literally "root binding," the building of trust and goodwill between people before any joint undertaking. The seminar has left US participants with an abundance of *nemawashi*. It has given an unprecedented boost to US/Japan cooperation and launched an initiative the benefits of which will no doubt visibly increase and deepen in years to come.

Following the seminar, Akiyoshi Kobayashi's generous letter to all US participants expressed perfectly NHK's spirit of openness: "Professionals are alike everywhere. Please do not hesitate to call on me or send a fax whenever I can be of any help to you. I know very well which button to push and in what order around here in NHK."

For a list of names and addresses of NHK contacts, call AIVF at (212) 473-3400.



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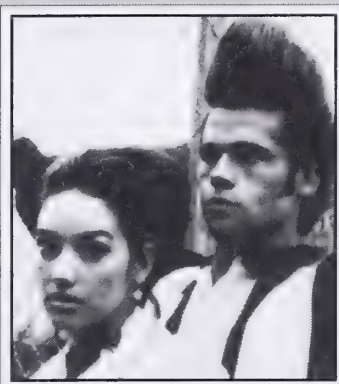
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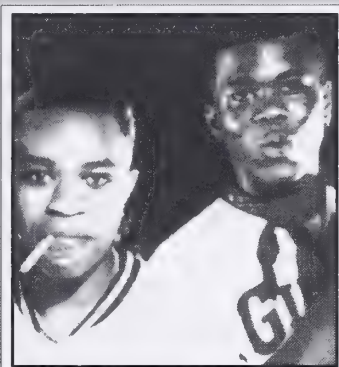
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11



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**COVER:** Trinh T. Minh-Ha uses structures drawn from fiction, poetry, and memory to challenge the rhetoric of traditional documentary. In this issue, Laleen Jamayane and Anne Rutherford interview Trinh about the fictions at the heart of the documentary form. Photo courtesy filmmaker.

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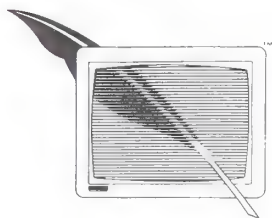
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## WHY STOP THE CHURCH WAS STOPPED

To the editor:

Catherine Saalfeld's piece in the October issue ["Tongue Tied: Homophobia Hamstrings PBS"] calls for a little amplification.

First, let me make clear that I did not cancel *Stop the Church* but, rather, withdrew it in the hope that we could reschedule it next season. It was PBS [Public Broadcasting System] that decided to cancel the documentary.

I think it important that all independent producers understand the complex nature of the public television system. No matter what Congress may have stated in the Public Broadcasting Act, neither the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, nor PBS, nor any individual producer or production entity can require any individual station to carry and/or broadcast any program. It is a local decision in each and every case.

In the case of *P.O.V.*, the majority of our funding comes from those very stations. If enough of them were to choose not to carry us, the series would cease to be. Therefore, as a national producer we must be extremely sensitive to the pressures and needs of each of those 300 stations.

Most of them, like most of public broadcasting, are dreadfully underfunded and understaffed. Only a few of them, five or six at best, have the staff and the know-how to deal on their own with controversial programs. The vast majority require a great deal of help and guidance, months in advance, when such a program comes along. Most of them are willing to broadcast such controversial programs, and they believe, as I do, that this is a proper role for public broadcasting.

When a program such as *Tongues Untied* or *Stop the Church* is broadcast, it is the local stations that take the heat, not PBS or *P.O.V.* Each local station manager must be responsive to his or her audience, board of directors, and sources of support.

In the case of *Tongues Untied*, our small *P.O.V.* staff provided each and every station with materials, sample letters, and other forms of support so that those stations which chose to run it could handle what was both a truly great film, a work of art, and a very difficult time for over-the-air broadcasters.

So much support went into helping the stations deal with *Tongues Untied* that *Stop the Church* was more or less ignored. I discovered that just two days before my decision to withdraw the program. I was not concerned about outside pressure, censorship, or offensiveness. Rather, I was concerned that we were putting the stations into a no-win situation, and that we might literally jeopardize the series as a whole because of poor staff work on our part. It was a very difficult decision. It's always much easier to say "yes" than to say "no."

I have also learned, over 40 years in broadcasting, that one can lead only so far as people will follow. If no one is with you, the war is lost for the sake of the battle. I want the *P.O.V.* series to stay in the schedule.

I don't know as yet whether we will re-offer *Stop the Church* next year. I would have to convince PBS to change their ruling and we have not yet decided whether to make that attempt.

—David M. Davis

President and CEO, Public Television Playhouse  
New York, NY





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## BACK INTO THE ACT

### SAG's Limited Exhibition Agreement Revived

What's a poor film director to do when casting a film and dealing with the Screen Actors Guild (SAG)? After a two-year struggle to revise SAG's low-low-budget contract for independent film production, an agreement reached by negotiators from the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) and SAG is finally providing some answers.

The revised version of the Independent Producers' Limited Exhibition Agreement (LEA) includes more precise definitions of showcase theaters, budgets, running time, and benefit contributions in an effort to eliminate "the temptation to abuse the purpose of the agreement," according to SAG's negotiator and New York executive director John Sucke.

The LEA was created five years ago to enable independent film producers with scant resources to employ union actors without breaking their budgets or undercutting the protections provided actors by the union. Drawn up by SAG and AIVF, the original agreement covered only independently conceived and produced motion pictures not intended for national theatrical exhibition, commercial television broadcast, or commercial cable. LEA films of 90 minutes or more were limited to a budget of under \$200,000 and restricted to "limited runs in showcase theaters"—a phrase which the agreement's originators understood to mean small, independent art houses.

The decision to revise the LEA came out of a dispute in late 1989 over the vagueness of certain LEA provisions. The Hollywood SAG office charged that Night Games Productions had violated the terms of the low-budget contract with a theatrical exhibition of its horror film *Frankenstein General Hospital* which ran for one week in 22 theaters in Nevada and Texas ["Monster Movie Tests Actor's Union Rules: SAG Low-Low Budget Contract in Negotiations," April 1990]. SAG claimed that these exhibitions constituted a commercial theater run and therefore violated the LEA. SAG ultimately lost the case because the arbitrator decided that the exhibitions could well be construed as a limited run and that the phrase "showcase theaters" in the SAG contract was not defined clearly enough to preclude such an action.

The new contract, which went into effect on July 15, 1991, is more precise concerning its definition of showcase theaters. The new LEA defines a limited-run exhibition in showcase theaters as "runs of up to two weeks in 'art houses' and small-audience theaters, specializing in new

creative films." The agreement names nine cinemas to illustrate the point—New York's Film Forum, San Francisco's Roxie Cinema, Chicago's Music Box, Washington DC's Biograph, Boston's Brattle Theater, Los Angeles' Nuart Theater, Santa Cruz' Nickelodeon, Pittsburgh's Fulton Theater, and Berkeley's U.C. Cinema.

Other modifications of the old contract include an overall budget limit of \$500,000, including deferrals; a stipulated increase in per-hour overtime pay from one-eighth to three-sixteenths the pro rata daily pay; and an increase in pension and health contributions for actors from 11 percent to 12.5 percent of the total wages. For Los Angeles producers, the new LEA is a bit stricter, limiting film budgets, including deferrals, to \$250,000, and running time to under 60 minutes. The new contract also includes an extra phrase underscoring that the LEA does not apply to pictures "produced primarily for commercial exploitation."

MARK TOWNSEND HARRIS

*Mark Townsend Harris is a filmmaker living in Brooklyn.*

## DOUBTS PLAGUE BAY-AREA MINORITY TV PROJECT

In an abrupt move last May, San Francisco's public television station KQED gave up fighting a 1988 Federal Communications Commission (FCC) ruling to take away its little-sister station KQEC. More mysterious than KQED's sudden change of heart is the group taking over the license—the Minority Television Project (MTP).

KMTP, which replaced KQEC on Channel 32 this September, is one of only two minority-owned broadcasting stations in the nation. Unlike KQED, MTP plans to make multicultural programming a priority in this city where there is a large minority population. But not everyone is convinced of MTP's good intentions. Larry Hall of the California Public Broadcasting Forum, a local public television watchdog group, is concerned that there was no community input on who got the license to KQEC and that MTP may not represent community interests any more than KQED. "There are some real questions about the viability of MTP," says Hall. "It may be another element of the long drawn-out warehousing of KQEC."

Two years ago the FCC revoked KQED's li-



The revised SAG Limited Exhibition Agreement spells out what kind of theaters are "art houses." San Francisco's Roxie Cinema is among those that qualify.

Courtesy Roxie Cinema



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cense to Channel 32 because KQED didn't program the station for five months in 1980, then lied to the FCC about why it took the action ["SF Pubcaster Pursues Joint News Venture with Commercial TV," April 1990]. After years of litigation and efforts to save KQEC—including an attempt to set up a joint programming venture with a local commercial station—KQED dropped the case. "If you've been told it's a matter of time before you lose the license, you're not going to go invest many millions of members' money into it," explains KQED's Greg Sherwood.

The decision to award the license to MTP caught both the independent community and MTP offguard. "We thought we would continue to be involved in legal proceedings for the next year-and-a-half," reports MTP president Otis McGee, a San Francisco attorney. As a result, the group of African American and Asian American entrepreneurs had to scramble to get the station on the air. When the license switch was announced, this reporter contacted one board member listed on FCC documents who said she didn't know whether or not she was on the board.

Although the eight-year-old group applied for the license five years ago, less than a week before the station was to go on the air MTP had no studio, almost no local programming, only five salaried employees, and little more than \$250,000 of the estimated \$1.2-million needed for its initial operating budget, according to an account in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. The San Francisco Redevelopment Agency granted the \$250,000 to MTP out of a public fund earmarked for economic revitalization of the Western Addition, a mostly black San Francisco neighborhood. In an August 13 meeting with leaders of the city's black community, KMTP legal counsel Booker T. Wade attempted to assuage concern about the diversion of funds by promising community representation on MTP's board—an agreement he reneged on less than two weeks later. Wade also promised that MTP would locate facilities in Western Addition. However, Ace Washington, an independent producer and Western Addition resident, told the *San Francisco Examiner*, "We haven't gotten any commitment to jobs or hiring."

McGee expects additional monies will come from "a variety of sources," including corporations, foundations, and grants, but maintains that MTP won't rule out more unconventional business deals to fund the station. Last year KQED proposed running 24-hour news produced by NBC-affiliate KRON on public KQEC. The plan—which fell apart in negotiations—was criticized by many public TV advocates who argued that the purpose of public TV is to air programs that don't make it on commercial TV.

The dubious track records of MTP executives have also generated concern. Station manager Adam Clayton Powell III—who abruptly resigned in October—was the owner of a news station in Oakland which shut down with thousands of unpaid bills in 1985. The *Washington Post* wrote a

lengthy account of a National Public Radio staff demoralized by Powell's management style when he was news director in their Washington office in 1989. Wade has been accused of misappropriating funds from the Los Angeles Black Television Workshop, which he controlled in 1988. The workshop, which was selling air time in spite of its nonprofit status, was eventually shut down by the FCC for violating building permits.

MTP's McGee says KMTP plans to offer works that "reflect the talents of minority producers and creative artists whose works are seldom made available on either commercial or noncommercial television." Since its debut, the station has run such programs as the Clarence Thomas Supreme Court confirmation hearings, profiles of minority leaders, documentaries about the Philippines and Mexico, and jazz programming.

Robert Anbian of the Film Arts Foundation says the interest in more minority programming is widely-held throughout the Bay Area, but argues that non-ethnic minorities—such as gays and the developmentally disabled—need a place on public television as well. Asked if the station would air works by non-ethnic minority or white independent producers, McGee offers, "We'll find out what materials are available by minority producers and minority artists and see if it's substantial enough to use for all our programming."

But not everyone is assured by MTP's wait-and-see attitude. "This market is more culturally diverse than any other place in the nation," contends Jim Yee, executive director of the National Asian American Telecommunications Association (NAATA) in San Francisco. "Evolving a working relationship between multicultural groups and affixing that to a common agenda will take a lot of capital and hard work. They need some degree of public discourse so we don't see a repeat of how other stations have worked—secretly and behind closed doors."

LAURA FRASER

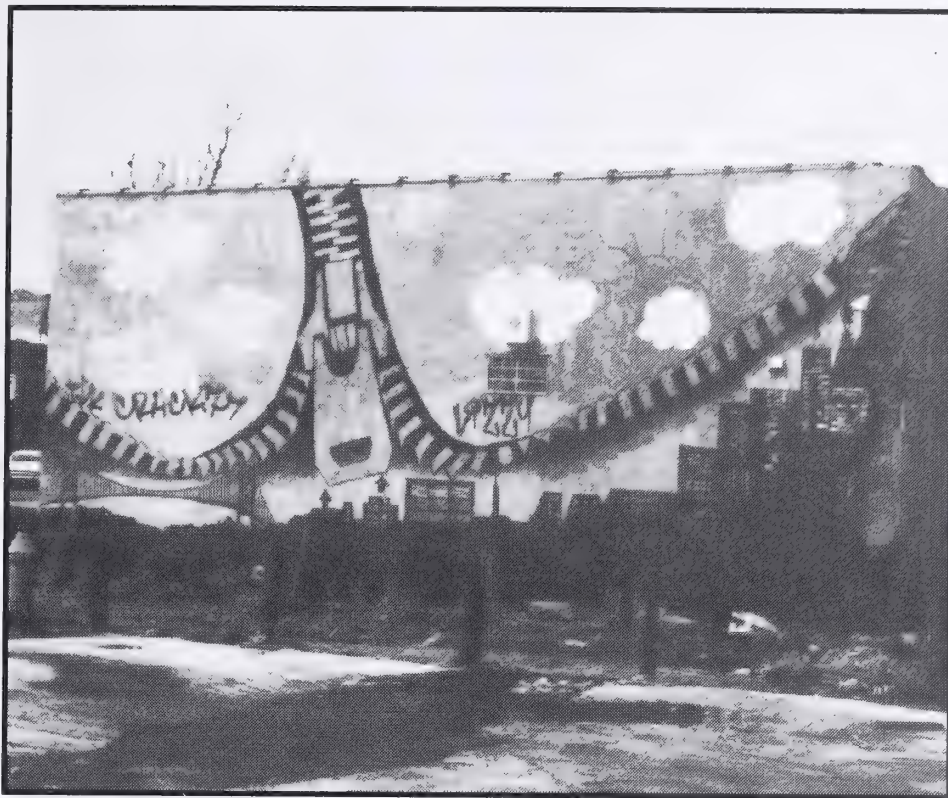
*Laura Fraser is a freelance writer who frequently covers media issues.*

## PEW COMES THROUGH FOR PHILLY'S WHY

Philadelphia public television station WHYY has received a grant for \$474,000 from the Pew Charitable Trusts to support three programming initiatives which have implications for Philadelphia-area independents. The station will use the grant to "commission, acquire and broadcast an innovative package of programs which will celebrate and involve the area's performing and media artists," according to WHYY.

Of the most direct benefit to area independents is the expansion of acquisition fees for WHYY's seven-year-old *Independent Images* series, an annual competitive showcase of independent work by media artists residing in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware. The additional funding will





allow WHYY to acquire or award on-line time to 40 programs in ranging in length from 45 seconds to one hour and to increase its acquisition fees. Artists now receive \$20 per minute or \$100 for works under five minutes (compared to last year's \$11 per minute and \$75 per short) for four airings over three years. The program also awards in-kind donations of on-line edit time to some applicants, a service which will be expanded thanks to the Pew grant. All pieces awarded editing time are broadcast as well.

Although the showcase has suffered a low profile from after-midnight airings and little promotion, such acquisitions have allowed area independents to receive money for their work and reach Philadelphia audiences on television. The deadline for submissions to *Independent Images* is usually in May of each year.

The grant is also funding a WHYY production involving two teams of Philadelphia-based independent filmmakers and choreographers. The collaborative production—which features director Robert Palumbo with choreographer Karen Bamonte and director Eugene Martin with performance artist/choreographer Steve Kriekhaus—will be presented in a single half-hour show which the station plans to air locally and hopes to distribute to PBS nationally.

Beyond the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, there are relatively few funding sources for independent production in Philadelphia, a situation which often limits the number of experienced crew and technical facilities independents can access for their work. Producing for WHYY presents a way for local artists to hone their skills, use high-end equipment and services, and expand

WHYY's *Independent Images*, which features such work as Eugene Martin's experimental *Invisible Cities*, about photographer Eugene Atget, was recently boosted with a grant from Pew Charitable Trusts.

Courtesy filmmaker

their video/filmographies. While not strictly an independent production, since it was produced for WHYY, this collaborative project does enable the artists involved to work in the broadcast arena and reach an audience.

WHYY will also commission, for the first time, four or five video art pieces by Philadelphia producers as part of its six-year-old program *Spotlight*, a series featuring local arts and civic personalities. *Spotlight* segments are four-minutes long and are typically used as filler between longer shows. The 24 episodes to be commissioned this year will include new works and works adapted for TV by area film/videomakers, playwrights, musicians, dancers, poets, and writers as well as mini-documentaries on cultural subjects.

The Pew Charitable Trusts has a long history of support for Philadelphia-area arts and cultural organizations and has periodically supported programs produced by WHYY. Regarding this particular grant, program director for culture at Pew, Marian Godfrey, explains, "Besides providing greater visibility for the cultural community, we wanted to support projects on WHYY that not only document the work of Philadelphia-based artists but also involve area media artists in creating works, and in producing their own works as artists." For more information about how to sub-

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DAVID HAAS

*David Haas is coordinator of the Philadelphia Independent Film and Video Association (PIFVA).*

## NATIONAL VIDEO RESOURCEFULNESS

In an age when the couch potato is in the ascendant and art houses are in decline, the video store claims a critical spot in the distribution of independent productions. Now the results of a nationwide survey conducted by National Video Resources (NVR) and *Video Software* magazine are helping independents crack the code of video stores and boost their representation on shop shelves and home screens.

Last February NVR mailed a survey to 4,224 stores that carry independent productions to find out what motivates stores' buying patterns and their customers' purchases. *Video Software* magazine simultaneously published the questionnaire, extending the survey's reach to its 42,000 retailer readers. The vast majority of stores polled are independently owned (86 percent) with an average stock of 4,000 titles.

Think of it as a crash course in capitalism: the results make clear what sells and what doesn't in the video kingdom. Foreign films and documentaries fared best of the 10 categories of nonmainstream special interest programming identified in the survey. Over 70 percent of respondents either rent or sell these titles, with history and war documentaries—carried by 90 percent—topping the list. Public service announcements and new age tapes receive the least attention, with only one-third or less stores renting them and less than 10 percent offering them for sale.

Customers judge a tape by its cover, it seems. After store employee recommendations—rated most important in influencing customer purchases by 80 percent of stores—video packaging was ranked as the next most significant factor (74 percent). Celebrity endorsements, on the other hand, were judged least effective in inspiring customer or store sales.

Availability of a full-length screening copy is the way to a retailer's heart, according to 84 percent of respondents, who judged it the most important factor in determining whether or not to buy a tape for the store. Promotional material—such as posters and literature—was also considered important (60 percent).

Ninety-one percent of retailers expressed interest in receiving a newsletter about independent and other feature videos, suggesting that there is an open door. To receive a copy of the survey results, contact: National Video Resources, 73 Spring St., Suite 6060, New York, NY 10012; (212) 274-8080.

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## SEQUELS

Midway into New York State's current fiscal year, a deficit of over a half-billion dollars has developed in the state's \$29-billion budget, despite last year's draconian cuts, including 44 percent less for the New York State Council on the Arts ["No Silver Lining: States Announce Declining Arts Budgets," November 1991]. The cause is a shortfall in projected tax revenues and higher spending on welfare and Medicaid. When this became evident in late October, Governor Cuomo told all state agencies, including NYSCA, to prepare alternate budgets incorporating further cuts of two to five percent. NYSCA thereupon froze its checks for current contracts. Cuomo has stated legislature resolves the deficit.

In January Cuomo will submit next year's budget to the legislature, which he has implied will again contain deep cuts for the arts agency. Last year Cuomo proposed a 60 percent cut for the arts, versus five to 15 percent for other state agencies.



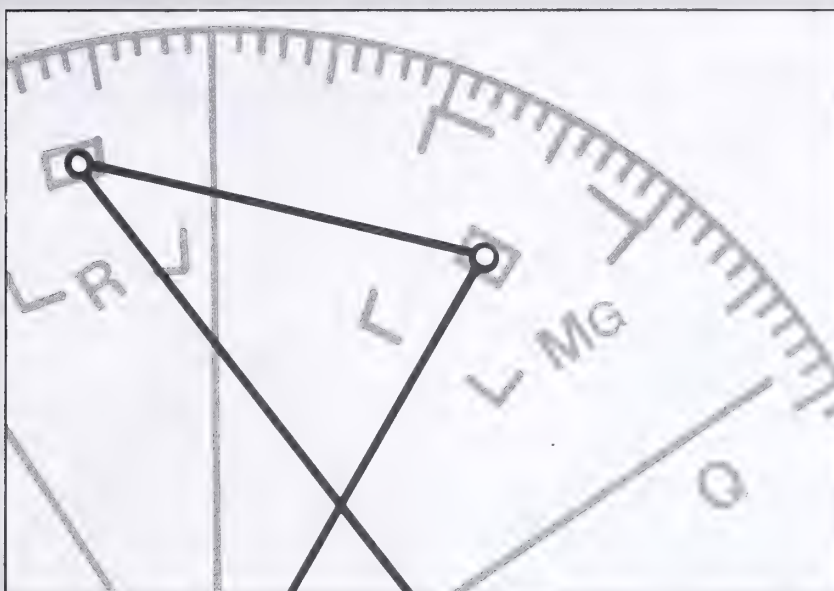
When the **National Endowment for the Art's** annual appropriations proceedings came up in Congress this fall, the majority of legislators lined up to back Senator Jesse Helms' provision prohibiting the use of tax dollars to "promote, disseminate, or produce materials that depict or describe, in a patently offensive way, sexual or excretory activities or organs." Despite the two-to-one margin of support in the House and a 68-28 vote in the Senate, the provision was subsequently eliminated from the spending bill by the conference committee as part of a deal with Western senators to preserve low grazing fees. NEA foe Rep. William Dannemeyer denounced it as a "swap of porn for corn." In place of Helms' motion the committee substituted last year's obscenity provision, which states only that the NEA "take into account general standards of decency" when awarding grants ["Sequels," January/February 1991].



While the nation's legislators appear increasingly willing to abide government-sanctioned censorship, the lower courts continue to buck the trend. On September 4, a Massachusetts court lifted the 24-year-old injunction on Frederick Wiseman's documentary *Titicut Follies*. A searing verité exposé of conditions in an asylum for the criminally insane, the film was grounded by a lawsuit upon completion in 1967. The presiding judge determined the film an invasion of inmates' privacy and ordered it burned. His ruling was stayed pending appeal, and the Massachusetts Supreme Court ultimately conceded that the film had value—but only for professional audiences of doctors, lawyers, and others concerned with custodial care. The recent court decision now makes the film openly available.



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became one of the more prominent appropriation artists in the 1980s, lost a recent copyright infringement lawsuit despite his **fair use** defense ["When Fair Is Foul: Fair Use and Copyright," October 1990]. The suit involved a sculpture Koons based on a greeting card photograph by Art Rogers of a couple holding eight German Shepard puppies. Koons argued that his appropriation was social critique and that Rogers' copyright extended only to the photograph "as a photograph" and not to the "factual" and "noncopyrightable" puppies and couple in the photograph. The federal judge in Manhattan disagreed, stating that Koons' sculpture was crafted directly from the photo without apparent transformation or critique. The case is being appealed.



Independent distributor October Films has a new partner, **Amir Malin**. A former founder of Cinecom Entertainment Group, Malin will be handling October's business affairs and ancillary sales. The company is relocating from Los Angeles to New York City in January. **Jon Gartenberg** has moved from the Museum of Modern Art's Department of Film to a post at Broadway Video Entertainment, where he will serve as archivist of their film, television, and animation product. Video artist and independent curator **Carole Ann Klonarides** was named the new media arts curator at the Long Beach Museum of Art. At Anthology Film Archives, **Jim Hubbard** was named exhibitions director and **Carol Rusk** became librarian. **Arthur Tsuchiya** has assumed the post of assistant director of the Media Program at the National Endowment for the Arts.

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## LITTLE BIG FEST

### The Locarno International Film Festival



Most Third World films at this year's Locarno were made with Second World funding, including *Life on a String*, by Chen Kaige.

Courtesy Film Society of Lincoln Center

#### LAWRENCE CHUA

Tucked in the affluent cleavage of alpine Switzerland, Locarno is home to palm trees, diesel spewing Fiats, and the Locarno International Film Festival, a notorious amalgamation of Third World vision and Second World money. This year, though, the emphasis shifted to the First World as North American films won most of the attention—and the awards.

Locarno, poised at the confluence of Switzerland's dominant ethnic groups, is a city of intersecting cultural spheres. It is an Italian city in Switzerland for vacationing Germans, with a film festival at which the official language is French. The festival's mascot is the leopard, a token of its exotic tendencies. It is a European festival attracting all the usual suspects: jaded Italian journalists, European and Australian curators, a handful of diplomatic distributors and exhibitors, even theater-chair salesmen. "All the fallout from Chernobyl has probably settled here," one critic noted, watching the Alps melt in the August sun. "Even geographically, Locarno is probably located in a kind of belly button of Europe," mused

the festival's new director, Marco Muller, the profoundly courteous Italian who recently left the Rotterdam International Film Festival in a flurry of controversy. "The manifold cultural differences you find in Switzerland are multiplied here."

Difference has always been the strong suit of Locarno, a festival skilled in maneuvering between the margins and the mainstream—the space between privilege and exclusion. As David Streiff, Locarno's outgoing director of the past decade, observed, "We had a formula that was very attractive—the biggest of the small festivals and the smallest of the big. This definition is fading out because we are getting bigger. In many people's minds we have stayed a small festival like Nantes or Telluride. They are astonished when they see so many people looking at their films."

The real attraction of Locarno is the outdoor screening facility set up in the Piazza Grande every night for films out of competition. This year up to 6,500 people sat on uncomfortable chairs for up to four hours fighting off mosquitos and watching the odd bat fly into the frames of Chen Kaige's magnificent *Life on a String*, Atom Egoyan's wily *The Adjuster*, the Coen brothers' *Barton Fink*, and John Singleton's *Boyz n the Hood*. The Piazza Grande offers the opportunity to catch up with

European directors like Jacques Rivette and Alain Tanner, whose troubling *The Man Who Forgot his Shadow* had its world premiere at Locarno. If the festival and its audiences have always been supportive of US independents like Jim Jarmusch, Spike Lee, and Gregg Araki, they seemed rather addled by the commercial and sometimes tutorial manner of a film like Singleton's. Muller, however, has other ideas about the festival's selections. "A screening venue like the Piazza is also the place to emphasize the idea of an avant garde existing in the mainstream," he said. He would love some day to screen Tim Burton's *Batman 2*.

Muller is also keen to have US independents in Locarno. His relationship with them dates back to Pesaro, where he organized an exhibition of the American avant garde, and to Rotterdam, where the number of US independents shown under Muller was much greater than previously.

Muller's pre-Locarno predilections also extended to Third World filmmaking. While at Pesaro, he organized the first retrospective of contemporary Chinese cinema outside of Asia. His arrival at Locarno, which traditionally has given prominence to Third World films, comes at a critical moment. This year every African, Asian, and Latin American film in competition was made

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This year's Golden  
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*Johnny Suede*, by first-  
time director Tom DiCillo,  
who previously worked  
as cinematographer for  
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with European funding—something that says as much about the state of film finance in the Third World as it does about the way Europeans look at work from these regions.

Such funding provides both an exchange and employment of Third World vision, but often the underlying impetus is something other than the desire to cross cultural borders. Maybe it's ultimately about controlling the movement of ideas. *Tinpis Run*, the feature debut of Papua New Guinea-based director Pengau Nengo, is a comedy about an enterprising taxi driver—a dignitary in his highland tribe—and his citified partner/son-in-law. An upbeat crowd pleaser made with French capital, the film underscores the complications associated with such coproductions. On the one hand, it plays as a folkloric spectacle pandering to European notions of exoticism. Yet it still manages to offer a wry look at the complex battle between tradition and development in Papua New Guinea. Interestingly, the arrival of Nengo himself was delayed due to visa complications.

Locarno's competition section admits only works of fiction that are longer than 60 minutes, 35 or 16mm, and have not been awarded a prize at a festival recognized by the Fédération Internationale des Associations des Producteurs de Films. Only films made by new directors or from

countries with a small, emerging film industry are accepted for the official competition. The United States was represented by Todd Hayne's *Poison*, Tom DiCillo's *Johnny Suede*, and Sean Penn's *Indian Runner*. Locarno's (all white) jury—cinematographer Michael Ballhaus, designer Mattia Bonetti, actress Arielle Dombasle, painter Eric Fischl, historian Annette Insdorf, director Xavier Koller, actor Vittorio Mezzogiorno, director Svetlana Proskourina, and European Film Distribution Office president Dieter Kosslick—artfully awarded the Gold Leopard and 30,000 Swiss francs to *Johnny Suede*. The Bronze Leopard and 5,000 Swiss francs went to another North American feature, Darrell Wasyk's *H*, a trite, insular film about two middle-class heroin users kicking their habit. The Soviet film *Oblako-Rai*, by Nikolai Dostal, won the Silver Leopard and 15,000 Swiss francs.

First-time director Tom DiCillo, who previously worked as cinematographer on Jim Jarmusch's *Stranger than Paradise* and *Permanent Vacation*, had a definite impression of Locarno before his arrival. "It was a small festival where they chose essentially lower budget, less commercial films, and they had an interest in independent filmmaking," he said. "At least that's what I heard." DiCillo noted that the Berlin International



Film Festival was probably a better place to sell a film, but he didn't want to wait until February. His choice proved a competent one; Miramax has since picked up the film for US distribution.

"This is a so-called market," noted Beki Probst, head of Locarno's market and a member of both the artistic and executive committees of the festival. "Usually the films shown here already have a distributor." Probst, who also runs the market at Berlin, summarized, "In Berlin it's sellers and buyers. Here it's more exhibitors and distributors."

Apparatus Productions' Christine Vachon was invited to Locarno with *Poison*. "In terms of selling the film, it's pretty much sold," she said. "But if the film has a presence here, it's going to help the rest of Europe. When we went to Berlin, we were trying to sell the film to distributors. This is the next step." Todd Haynes' next film will get a "fair amount" of money from Europe, Haynes predicted, and he and Vachon were hoping to make a presale. "Every interview greases the wheels for future business deals," said Haynes.

The market was a lubricant for distributors like Switzerland's Trigon, which showed off the restored print of Ritwik Ghatak's devastating *Subarnarekha*, a masterpiece of Bengali cinema made in 1962 about a family uprooted during the partition of India and Bangladesh. Ghatak's epic of alienation and displacement was echoed in the competition film *Cheb*, by French director Rachid Bouchareb. In *Cheb*, Merwan Kechida (Mourad Bounaas) is deported to Algeria, his birthplace, for committing minor crimes in France, where he spent nearly all of his 19 years. He is stripped of his passport, pressed into military service, and forced to confront his identity between two continents. A French-Algerian coproduction, Bouchareb's film netted the festival's second Bronze Leopard.

While Edward Yang's three-hour-long *A Brighter Summer Day* was not a coproduction, it instigated at least one question that such efforts raise. A surprise addition to Locarno ("avant-première" declared the announcements), the film takes its name from an Elvis Presley lyric. It was inspired by the real-life story of a 14-year-old boy's murder of his same age girlfriend in 1961, and it recreates the tragedy and uncertain future of the time, a period of intense disillusionment and confusion. One critic asked Yang if he edited the film down from its original four-hour version with Western audiences in mind. "No," responded Yang coolly. "I had human beings in mind."

One promising sideshow of the festival was the inaugural series "Leopards of Tomorrow," a show of film school productions curated by director Cyrille Rey-Coquais (touted by Muller as one of Switzerland's most promising new talents). The sidebar showed the formative works of Martin Scorsese, Oliver Stone, Krzysztof Kieslowski, Andrei Tarkovsky, Roman Polanski, and Idrissa Ouedraogo alongside shorts from New York University, Columbia, University of Southern Cali-

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fornia, and University of California-Los Angeles students, and their European counterparts. The High Cinema Institute of Giza in Egypt had a single film in the exhibition, but there was a conspicuous absence of voices from the likes of the Philippines' Mowelfund and China's Beijing Film Academy.

Muller seems to have designs on positioning Locarno in the league of festivals like Berlin. He spoke of moving the festival from August to July to oblige the schedules of European film professionals, but for now, at least, the dates remain the same. The rumor afoot is that instead Locarno will be inviting about 70 European and American journalists, distributors, and broadcast executives. Muller also announced a plan to create a production fund similar to the Hubert Bals fund, which provides up to \$15,000 to film projects by Third World directors, and to the CineMart at Rotterdam, which shifted its traditional market function under Muller to a forum for coproduction deals. These moves will further ingratiate the festival with maverick cineastes, bettering their chances of contending with what David Streiff calls "the virginity complex of the festivals" to find world premieres. It will also further the ongoing transaction between the Swiss and US film industries. In January the arts council of Switzerland, Pro Helvetia, will kick off several US tours of Swiss films, including retrospectives of Alain Tanner and Daniel Schmid, and a package of the new Swiss cinema.

Meanwhile, Locarno's transition period of the next few years will be interesting, to say the least, for independents to observe. "We had in mind a certain kind of continuity," said Probst, distractedly watching the milling market attendees. "What is that saying in English? 'There is no sense in killing a running horse.'"

*Lawrence Chua is a radio commentator and writer whose work has appeared in the Village Voice, the New York Times, Rolling Stone, and Transistion.*

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## SOUL REBEL WITH A CAUSE

THOMAS HARRIS

**A Diary of a Young Soul Rebel***by Isaac Julien and Colin MacCabe**Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991; 218 pp; \$45 (cloth), \$17.95 (paper)*

Black British film is facing a critical moment. Following eight productive years, the black film collectives have seen their Channel Four funding sharply curtailed and now find themselves thrust into the marketplace, competing for money in an environment that shows little interest in black film practice.

It's in this context that Isaac Julien, a member of the London-based Sankofa collective, managed to direct his first feature film, *Young Soul Rebels*, a Sankofa/British Film Institute (BFI) coproduction. The story of its production is told in *A Diary of a Young Soul Rebel*, coauthored by Julien and BFI executive producer Colin MacCabe. The book is a behind-the-scenes look at the evolution of the film from idea to distribution and an

intriguing mix of reflection, gossip, and theory. It falls into three complementary sections—the production diaries of Julien and MacCabe, a conversation between Julien and cultural critic bell hooks, and the complete screenplay, written by Paul Hallam and Derrick Saldaan McClintock.

Julien's film *Young Soul Rebels*, which will be released theatrically in the US in December, explores black British diasporic culture and interracial gay romance in the context of the soul clubs of the 1970s. The impetus for this film, as in his earlier *Looking for Langston*, Julien notes in the book's introduction, comes from his desire to articulate a version of black British history not found in the official hegemonic transcripts. "In 1977 it was hard to get hold of this Black American music," Julien notes in the book's introduction. "It was difficult to find icons, but the reinvention started around the music, opening a space for a whole number of transgressions—both sexual and racial: these were the first clubs with black and white, straight and gay mixed in the audience."

The significance of such a unique time and space for Julien—a black gay artist—is obvious.

The BFI's Colin MacCabe is white, straight, and admits his dislike of soul music early on. One wonders what lies behind his and the BFI's interest in this film. MacCabe is quick to articulate his position, stating in his introduction that, throughout the five years spent working on *Rebels*, his vision was to bring forth "a whole slice of British life that has never reached the screen before" in an effort to "celebrate the possibilities of the polyglot and miscegenated society that Britain is now." Such words have a golden ring. However, upon reading the diaries, one gets an inkling that all isn't peaches and cream in paradise.

The diaries provide accounts of feature filmmaking in Britain from a director's and a producer's perspective simultaneously. Both are critical of the British film industry. The tenuous position of European filmmaking, and British filmmaking in particular, in the shadow of Hollywood's global dominance is the subject of several of MacCabe's entries: "What is desperately needed is to draw on the lessons of the past 10 years and come up with a plan for European cinema. This is ostensibly what the Downing Street Seminar is about. But Thatcher's ignorance about economics and our own industry's fixation on the States means that the enormous chances offered by Europe in the '90s are bound to be missed." Julien, on the other hand, focuses on the particular pressures and constraints of working with a larger (though still relatively small) feature film budget. "If we really want that extra excitement around cinema, they'll have to pay for it," Julien writes, "otherwise they have to forget about all this union nonsense, which I'm not saying in a post-Thatcherite way, but there are too many people being paid far too much money on the shoot and the money could be better spent in different places."

The diaries are highly revelatory, both in what is disclosed and what remains unspoken. Julien's entries address the day-to-day practice of directing the film: working with actors, getting specific shots, keeping order and control on the set, and ensuring that his vision is actually translated onto



Interracial gay romance and black diasporic culture in the British soul clubs of the seventies are the subject of Isaac Julien's film *Young Soul Rebels*.

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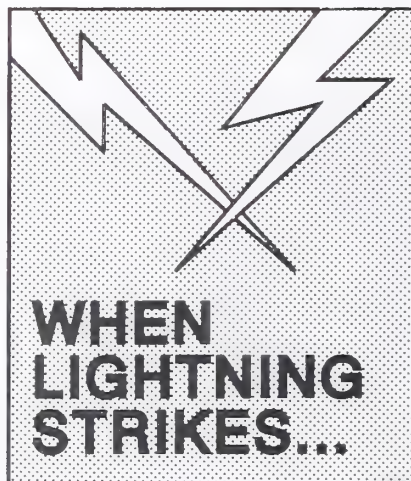
film. Using film to reconstruct an historic moment for which no official documentation exists is one of Julien's unique challenges. "It's absolutely imperative that what the lead actors wear is right," writes Julien. "There is no archive which shows us what black people wore in 1977, especially in the soul scene. It's totally undocumented, so memory becomes extremely important."

Julien's diary also reflects concerns particular to black directors working with black actors: "[A] lot of black actors are not really given a chance to show their full range of capabilities. When you work with them, you have to unpack them somehow, which is very hard work." He also discusses discrepancies inherent in the medium, attributing the difficulty in lighting dark and light skin in the same frame to the fact that "film is a non-neutral technology, premised on favouring lighter skin tones."

MacCabe's entries provide a complementary overview of the film's evolution, from script development to distribution and marketing. He tends to be more dialectic than Julien, frequently indulging in theoretical meditations around the subjects of audience, authorship, the roles of director and producer, and film history: "The *Cahiers [du Cinema]* critics were concerned to challenge the prevailing dominance of the script in French movies, stressing those elements—shot sequence, lighting, performance—which made up the specific elements of the experience of the film...the *Cahiers* critics were thus concerned to stress those elements which [Roland] Barthes, from a literary point of view, felt that the concept of an author repressed."

The disparity between the two diaries provides some insight into the relationship and power dynamics between director and producer. For instance, MacCabe clearly delineates not only his relationship with Julien but also the director's character. Their power struggles and various conflicts—over the director of photography and the film's scoring, among others—are discussed quite openly. Julien makes no mention of such conversations, nor does he ever articulate his thoughts about MacCabe and their relationship, despite some apparently difficult and compromising moments. One wonders why he chose to remain silent on what were clearly significant moments in the making of his film.

Julien provides a clue in his diary's opening entry, in which he describes a British film industry luncheon hosted by then Prime Minister Thatcher. The lunch's subject was government subsidy and the future of British film production. "I wanted to speak about how the possibility of getting funding for a film like *Young Soul Rebels* is made totally impossible because of the Government's attitude to European initiatives such as the Media Programme and Eurimages," Julien notes. "In the course of [BFI director] Wilf Stevenson's talk, he said that I was to begin shooting in a fortnight and shouldn't really be here, to which the Prime Minister said, 'Oh, really?...And can we have the next person?' I suppose I should have made an inter-



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vention there and then, but I thought to myself, why should I? I felt a bit set up—the token black... Although I did manage to say a few things afterwards, I really didn't see the point when so many things were sewn up and premeditated... For me, keeping silent was a weapon against not exposing myself."

This silence is underscored by Julien's willingness to speak openly about his private pleasures and pain, including the death of two friends from AIDS-related illnesses. In contrast, his entries show little of Julien the theorist and artist. While MacCabe's and Julien's diaries add up to a thorough and insightful account of the dynamics of feature filmmaking in Britain, one longs for more of what lies behind Julien's work—his creative process, as well as his desires.

Fortunately the conversation between Julien and bell hooks provides an opportunity for the director to discuss his work. It is here that Julien takes up the theme of the black diasporic subjectivity that provides the inspiration for his films. Responding to hooks' insightful and provocative observations, Julien speaks about the activist nature of his work, specifically the plurality of representation of the black subject, black masculinity, and gay male sexuality in a postcolonial age marked by AIDS and a rise in black nationalism.

In their critiques of current cultural productions that involve the black subject, ranging from Benetton advertisements to Marlon Riggs' videotape *Tongues Untied*, their conversation reveals what in Julien's words are some of the "freaky deeky and hybrid aspects of black cultural expression" that he attempts to reconstruct in his film. Interrogating Julien, hooks asks, "After I saw *Young Soul Rebels*, the person I really wanted to have sex with was the white male Billibudd (Jason Durr). It strikes me there's a dilemma here: how can we name the black desire of the white body without reinscribing the idea of black self-hatred or distaste for the black body?"

Citing references from diverse and seminal theorists, Julien responds that it is through transgressive representations—interracial sex, gay sexuality, alternative representations of masculinity—that he attempts to speak about and provoke discussion around the ambivalence of desire. When attempting such transgressions, "there's always this unconcealing of ambivalent 'structures of feeling,' to use Raymond Williams' term," Julien explains. "And that's why it becomes an exciting new way of uncovering various taboos in black politics or black cultural representations. One's ambivalence...isn't found so much in polemic, in what one says, as in one's fantasies, in one's desires; there's a way in which all these different repressions and oppressions are reinscribed in the psyche....[My work is] trying to propose differences which do make a difference. That's the way that one can move forward in some of these debates."

*Thomas Harris is a writer and film/video producer living in New York.*

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# NO SACRED COWS

## Essays on Communications in a Conservative Age

ANDREW BLAU

### Capitalism and Communication: Global Culture and the Economics of Information

by Nicholas Garnham

Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications, 1990; 216 pp; \$45 (cloth), \$18.95 (paper)

Most people read books from the beginning, but in this case I recommend against it. Not that the first essay is a bad one—in fact, it's quite strong. It's more that the opener's dense academic language may keep people from wading any further into this superb and lively set of essays by the English communications theorist Nicholas Garnham. *Capitalism and Communication: Global Culture and the Economics of Information*, a selection of Garnham's work from 1979 to 1987, is essential

grams, which studied the effects of media in isolation from social or cultural forces. The other was speculative, with strong ties to contemporary trends in French intellectual circles. Garnham misses few opportunities to emphasize his differences with these schools. In one typical instance, he goes the extra yard in his criticism of the "pseudo-radicalization" of British film studies, pausing to dismiss "the Platonic hotch-potch of Althusser and Lacan that passes for film theory while clogging the pages of *Screen*."

Behind such sniping lies the conviction that the media is too important to be left to untethered discourse studies and too enmeshed in the cultural fabric to be isolated through unreflective empiricism. Garnham analyzes media as a set of specific cultural institutions formed under specific social conditions, in an effort to "make plain the connections between theory and practice—communications theory and political practice."

of much that the US independent community holds dear, including "the long debate and campaigns around Channel Four [in the UK], the touching faith in cable access, Left support for 'free' or 'community' radio and so forth." But, unfailingly, Garnham is dismissive for the right reasons.

For example, his analysis of state support for the arts suggests that the fundamental assumptions behind government arts policy have made that policy congenitally ineffective. In an analysis prepared for the Greater London Council, Garnham concludes that "it is access to distribution which is the key to cultural plurality. The cultural process is as much, if not more, about creating audiences or publics as it is about producing artifacts and performances. Indeed, that is why the stress upon the cultural producers...is so damaging." While this position may be guaranteed to cost Garnham support among independents, Garnham's fundamental insight—that funding producers does not solve the deeper problems of cultivating a vigorous cultural sphere—merits serious consideration as US independents consider the threats to government funding agencies. In response, Garnham stresses the need to analyze the distribution of books, records, periodicals, films, and videos as aspects of one overarching problem, which he defines as "placing enhanced cultural choice in the hands of individuals and groups." To do so, Garnham proposes that we reemphasize the creative role of the editor, who organizes material for audiences. He also argues, albeit cautiously, for the rehabilitation of the marketplace as a means by which producers and audiences may find each other, a marketplace freed of the distorting effects of concentrated wealth and power.

Garnham also rips into the theory that small format video is inherently democratizing. With a bristling clarity, Garnham pulls apart the myths that have surrounded video since its commercial introduction: that portable video "gives the people at large access to the means of production of television and is thus a powerful force for democratic participation"; that access to video "gives one access to a mode of communication"; that the nonprofessional use of portable video enables a "de-mystification of the media"; and other familiar arguments. Here again, while many of the specifics may seem outdated (e.g., "the next generation of video equipment is being updated to three-quarter-inch and color capability"), Garn-

Garnham can be downright dismissive of much that the US independent community holds dear.

reading for independents interested in mass communications in the US and UK today. The book is a wide-ranging survey of television, film, and telecommunications in the 1980s, a period in which deregulation, privatization, and consolidation reorganized the practice of making and distributing media. The essay format, held together by Garnham's politically-based analysis of the economics that support the culture industries, allows a reader to dip in at will. Some of the essays are quite short, yet the signal-to-noise ratio is so high that sometimes five pages is all you need before it's time to catch your breath.

Garnham, a professor at the School of Media Studies at the Polytechnic of Central London and director of the Centre for Communication and Information Studies, has long been associated with the British journal *Media, Culture, and Society* (MCS), for which he was an editor. MCS appeared in response to the two dominant approaches within British media studies in the mid-to late-seventies. One was the empirical school, emanating from US mass communications pro-

Garnham believes in those connections with a force that can be breathtaking. Halfway into the book, he articulates the "strong version" of his thesis: "Changes in media structure and media policy...are properly political questions of as much importance as the question of whether or not to introduce political representation...; that the FCC's policy towards broadcast regulation is as important as the question of States' rights and that politicians, political scientists and citizens concerned with the health and future of democracy neglect these issues at their peril." And you thought it was just television.

Of the book's 11 chapters, more than half address themes that come up regularly in independent media circles—media education, the democratizing potential of small-format equipment, the social importance of independent media, and the role of state funding. Despite the fact that some of these essays were first written 10 or 12 years ago, their insights remain surprisingly fresh.

Not all of Garnham's analyses will be pleasing to independents. He can be downright dismissive



ham's underlying premise cannot be repeated often enough—as a technology, portable video “does nothing at all for freedom.” It is only when we see video as one communications tool among many and focus attention on the “various modes of intervention” specific media makes possible that we can put video in its broader social context.

Certain themes arise again and again. Most obviously, Garnham is a strong supporter of the British tradition of public service broadcasting, typified by the original ideals of the British Broadcasting Corporation (although he is quick to recognize the BBC's many faults in practice). Garnham argues that the public service model deserves our strong support because it is based on a properly *political* relationship between programmers and viewers (i.e., among citizens bound by a common interest in a democratic culture), rather than on an economic relationship between producers, advertisers, and consumers. As such, he deplores deregulation for its “destruction of public service as the preferred mode for the allocation of cultural resources” and its implicit suggestion that “we can hand over the solution of deep-seated political problems to the engineers and marketing men” of the world's largest manufacturers and producers.

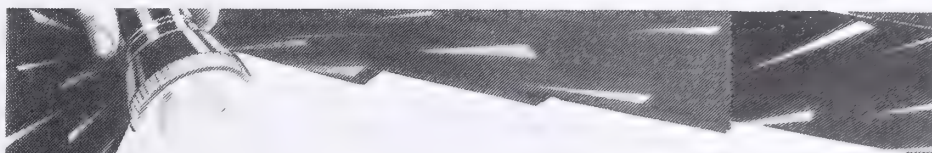
Even a collection as strong as this has its faults. The essay structure means there is little sustained critique. Although Garnham does add a bit of connective tissue, topics are taken up and put down as he moves from one essay to the next. Perhaps more seriously, Garnham's illuminating critique is not always matched by similarly concrete suggestions. He offers directions and good reasons for following them, but without a clear sense of how to get there. Finally, Garnham's vigorous style at times becomes positively overheated, such as when he argues that media studies needs to “re-establish its links with the mainland of the social sciences, the queen of which is history in the robes of historical materialism.”

Nevertheless, Garnham combines a solid base of data on issues, such as ownership and consumption, with a focus on the implications of economic trends and public policies for a democratic media culture. His analyses are first-rate and deserve far more attention among independent medi makers. Garnham has provided us with a primer for understanding our condition and a sound framework for building new solutions.

*Andrew Blau researches communications policy and technology developments at the Columbia Institute for Tele-Information at Columbia University.*

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# Why a Fish Pond?

AN INTERVIEW WITH  
**Trinh T. Minh-ha**



"With husband, she can't go anywhere. With children, she can't even have peace for one hour." All stills from Trinh T. Minh-ha's *Surname Viet Given Name Nam*.

Courtesy filmmaker

LALEEN JAMAYANE AND ANNE RUTHERFORD

TRINH T. MINH-HA IS A FILMMAKER, WRITER, AND COMPOSER WHOSE FILMS include *Reassemblage* (1982), *Naked Spaces: Living is Round* (1985), *Surname Viet Given Name Nam* (1985), and the recently completed film on China, *Shoot for the Contents* (1991). She came to the US from Vietnam in 1970 and is currently Professor of Cinema at San Francisco State University.

This interview was conducted by Laleen Jayamane and Anne Rutherford in June 1990, when Trinh was guest at the Sydney and Melbourne International Film Festivals, where her film *Surname Viet Given Name Nam* was screened. (The interview, excerpted below, was first published in the November 1990 issue of the Sydney magazine *Film News*.)

*Surname Viet Given Name Nam* explores the situation of Vietnamese women before, during, and after the revolution, as well as their shift to life in the Vietnamese community in the United States. Challenging the rhetoric of traditional documentary, the film utilizes structures drawn from fiction, poetry, and memory. The refusal to fall into fixed political positions or cinematic forms runs throughout Trinh's work. Both her theoretical writings and films work with "the space between, the interval to which established rules or boundaries never quite apply."

Through the allegorical figure of the dragon, Trinh's new film, *Shoot for the Contents*, offers a reflection on power and change as it relates to the contemporary shifts of culture and politics in China and is refracted by the Tiananmen Square events.

**Laleen Jayamane:** You've said, "To cut across boundaries and borderlines is to leave the maze of categories and labels. It is to resist simplistic attempts at classifying, to resist the comfort of belonging to a classification and of producing classifiable works." How appropriate is it to position your work as documentary, especially because you undo some of the canonical forms of this genre?

**Trinh T. Minh-ha:** In other words, why such a category at all in film? Why, for example, the convenient split between Lumière and Méliès? Or between Eisenstein and Vertov? To simplify a complex situation, let's say that when people come to see a fiction film, they usually expect a good story, whereas when they come to see a documentary film, they expect information and truth. Since these are the very notions I work with in my films, it is not incorrect to position my work as documentary, because that is where the "battleground" has been situated. However, I see my films more as cutting across several boundaries—boundaries of fiction, documentary, as well as



experimental films, for example (for many, the word “experimental” means only the adoption of an avant-garde vocabulary, hence only another category in film, albeit an “alternative” one). Thereby, they question both their own interiority and their own exteriority to the categories mentioned.

**Anne Rutherford:** Your work has often been discussed in terms of its deconstruction of documentary—as if all of the techniques that you use are specifically working against standard devices of documentary form. To me, that seems a fairly inappropriate way of talking about those devices.

**Trinh:** Well, there was a time when my films were only talked about in terms of ethnographic filmmaking—because of the subject that I chose to film and also because of certain issues of anthropology that I raised. At that time I strongly felt that such a location was used more as a form of escapism than as an attempt to understand what was at stake in these films. It was a convenient means to confine their critical scope to a specific practice of filmmaking, hence to deny the full implications of their strategic choices. Now, people talk about them more in terms of documentary because of the last film I made, *Surname Viet Given Name Nam*. But the issues of representation raised do not just pertain to ethnographic and documentary filmmaking. What I bring into question in connection with anthropology obviously does not just concern anthropology, but the whole of the human and social sciences. So for me, all the questions broached in my films have a much wider scope than the frames they are often confined to, although they remain specific and context-bound in their materializations.

**Rutherford:** In *Reassemblage*, one of the ways you challenge the position of knowledge which derives from anthropology or ethnography is to work with elements of visual fascination and pleasure. It seems that *Surname Viet Given Name Nam* has shifted quite a lot away from that strategy. What’s happened in that shift?

**Trinh:** It’s always interesting to hear how other people see the different films. I see *Surname Viet* as taking up similar issues but from a different angle and in a different context of knowledge production. I think you have put your finger on an aspect of my work that is not always easy to talk about—namely, the resistance to the packaging of knowledge through a certain insistence on visual fascination and pleasure, or, as I would put it, on the nonverbal dimension of film, which includes the silences, the music, and the environmental sound as well. Instead of talking about visual pleasure in *Reassemblage*, I would rather say that, without being acquainted with the feminist works on film at the time, I was mainly working with the look. How the West has been looking at other cultures, how these cultures look at themselves being looked at, and how my own story as onlooker-looked-at is enmeshed in such a reflection. When you see an object, you are not seeing the look. That’s why for many people it was impossible to understand the film, because they were looking for the object and, hence, expecting some kind of packaging of the culture.

**Jayamane:** Your staged interviews are conducted as performances—lit in a particular theatrical manner, posed by the voice, and performed by the camera, whose rhetoric varies with each interview. In all of this you are simultaneously undoing the conventions of the interview and creating a scene where what is spoken has almost a ritual charge. It is, as you say, neither a matter of simply parodying the cliché nor correcting it, but doing something else altogether. Can you speak about what this “something else” is?





**Trinh:** To come back to the choice of staging these interviews, usually in documentary films reenactments are used mainly when people want to break away from the monotony of talking heads. Most of the time, reenactment has to do with the desire for action or for a story to develop. But here reenactment is used precisely for the part that usually people would not think of reenacting, which is interviews. It is used to deal with the notion of interviewing itself and with the interview as a cinematic frame, thereby refusing to reduce its role to that of a mere device to authenticate the message advanced. The latter reductive approach to interviews is precisely what makes talking heads boring, not the talking in itself nor the heads.

In *Surname Viet*, I worked with both reenacted and so-called natural interviews. By having the staged and the real together, what is brought out is the element of fiction in representation—the fictions of film caught in the fictions of life. Of course, the point here is not to blur the line between fiction and fact so as to render invisible the artifice of reenactments. These were acknowledged throughout the film in a wide range of cues, but when exactly the cues were picked up depends on each viewer. To have the staged and the real together is to call attention to the politics of interviews and to set into relief the manipulations that tend to be taken for granted in documentary. So that what one thinks of as being more natural (i.e. closer to the conventions of documentary) is actually just as, if not more, fictionalized as in the earlier part of the film.

Moreover, if I was very much a director in the reenacted part of the film, I was more a coordinator in the “real-life” part, because I asked the women to choose how they wanted to be presented as we moved to their own stories. The choices they came up with were often disturbing to me. I was expecting something that relates intimately to their daily existence and instead, they chose something that was...I wouldn’t say nonexistent, but almost. For example, one woman wanted to be seen at a fish pond. She had no fish pond at home; so the whole crew had to go through this ordeal of finding a fish pond for her. Why a fish pond? Why not choose something you really like in your daily situations? She said no, it is a fish pond that I really like to be shot with, and I realized afterwards, looking at the footage, how important

this fish pond is, both for her personally and for the film. She is a working-class woman living at the time in a very small apartment with a large family. Having always been such a richly significative symbol in Asian cultures, the fish pond seems to point here to a dream space, a space of meditation where you can rest and retreat from the pressure of daily work. The fact that she made that choice was not only meaningful with regard to her own situation, it also tells you how, when you want something true to someone’s life, what you get usually goes much further than the mere details of that person’s daily existence.

The same applies to the way they chose to dress. I know that a number of Western viewers have had problems with all the women being middle-class—at least in their eyes. But dress codes are also class-informed and their (the viewers’) being misled in their judgement by their own dress code is in itself a problem of class. There is no legacy of pride in dressing down among poor people or among people coming from Third World nations. On the contrary, the latter dress up when they are in a public situation—like being on film and being watched by thousands of spectators. So the women in my film all chose to dress up. I was time and again disconcerted by the combination of showy colors, but finally I stood by their choices because that’s how they wished to be presented. As a result, the question of dressing became one of the threads of the film, as it wove in quite pertinently with the question of (de)territorializing the woman’s body and Vietnam as a nation. So all in all, the person who was very narrow-minded in this instance was myself, not the women. These few examples are given here mainly to point to how fiction operates right in the heart of documentation. The truest representation of oneself always involves elements of fiction and of imagination; otherwise, there is no representation, or else, only a dead, hence “false,” representation.

**Rutherford:** There is another process operating that goes beyond an awareness of manipulation. With the delay between the written text and the spoken text in the interviews, what happens is an endless oscillation of uncertainty. It’s not as if at some point you realize that it’s reenactment, but you are constantly being pulled back and forth in terms of how to interpret





it. There is an endless tension, a destabilization of meaning, which is much more dynamic and exciting than the simple recognition of manipulation.

**Trinh:** Yes, I agree. You are probably referring to the earlier part of the film, and I was bent more on comparing it to the latter part of the film. It would be difficult to point to this slippery realm, to pin down the effect it has on the viewers, when and how they start seeing a different pacing, a different structure of the film. All that I know is that this does hit them strongly. Whether it is a question of rendering visible the manipulations or not is not so much the point as that something different is happening which would provoke awareness and reflection.

As for the tension created by a destabilization of meaning, I think there is also a very interesting problem raised in relation to the question of women and empowerment. A couple of women viewers did tell me they were extremely upset looking at the film. They asked, by having the text appear while the women were speaking, am I not taking away from them the power of speech and undermining my own goal for the film? So, to be able to discuss the question, I had to ask the person what she thought I wanted to achieve, and she answered, quite annoyed, to show women's power, of course! to empower women through speech.

I can't say here that I only wanted to empower women, or as people like to put it, to "give voice" to the women involved. The notion of giving voice is so charged, because you have to be in such a position that you can give voice to other people. There's also the illusion that you give voice, whereas the film is very much the voice of the filmmaker—the term voice meaning here the place from which meaning is produced. No matter how plural and diverse the voices featured, one always has to point back to the apparatus and the site from which these voices are brought out and constructed, and so the notion of giving voice remains extremely paternalistic.

Moreover, the question of empowering women through speech is highly problematic, because women's relationship with language and speech has always been an uncomfortable one. Language, of course, is never neutral. It is the site where power relationships are most complex and pernicious; yet it is also a place of liberation. Whether it frees or enslaves depends on how it is used, and it is pernicious only when its workings are invisible. So having the women articulate their oppression is not enough. One also has to do something to point to both the fact that language is a *tool* of power and the fact that possessing power is like owning a leaking boat. This was hopefully achieved in the film through the tension created between what the viewers hear, what they read, and what they see.

This tension actually came about in the process of making the film. The reenacted interviews had been carried out in Vietnamese and translated into French for publication, and then translated again by myself into English. Instead of going back to Vietnamese for more authenticity, I rather deal with the notion of translation itself, and not claim any authentic retrieval. There is here no real desire to make people believe that what they have on screen

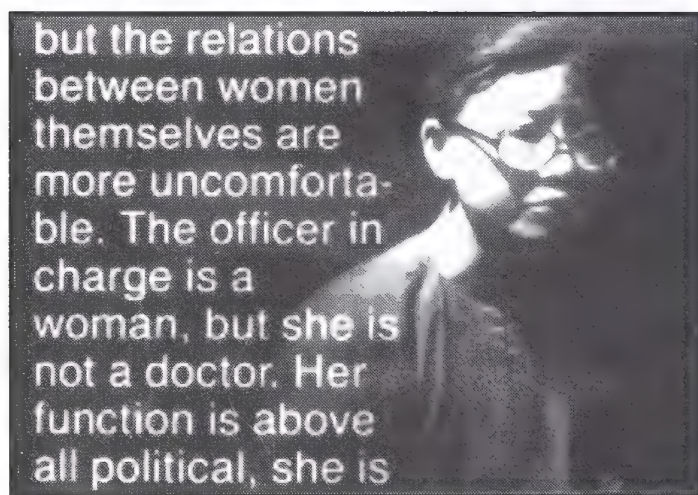
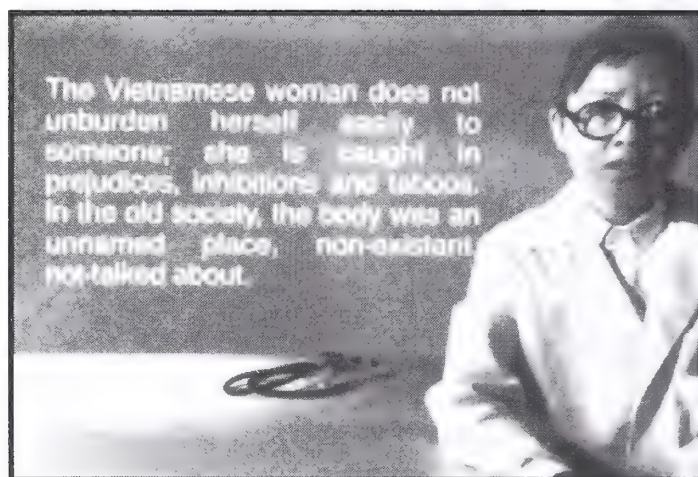
happened in Vietnam, so to have the interviews in Vietnamese would just be using the cliché. In other words, it is like going back to the illusion of unmediated reality, evading the staging by not acknowledging it, whereas the use of English in the context of Vietnam and of Vietnamese in the context of the US already creates a displacement, and a tension arises because not only do you have to listen to these Vietnamese faces speaking English, but you also have to understand a different sound of English.

A tension is also created because the women were struggling with language. At one point in the rehearsal they really revolted against the whole idea of delivering their speeches in English and said, it's not an English that we speak in everyday situations, so why are you making us go through this? They were sick and tired of all the "ism" words, and they tended to skip all the conjunctions, prepositions, adverbs for which they had no use whatsoever. These arbitrary, grammatically correct "accessories" simply made no sense. But the words they rejected are words they use in their everyday Vietnamese, and as with the women whose voices they embody, it's a challenge to translate their silver-tongued delivery. I would rather remain true to their level of Vietnamese than to their level of English. What usually happens in the situation of refugees is that since they do not master the new language, the image they offer to the hegemonic culture has consistently been that of a people who are unable to conceptualize, to have any sophisticated thinking, or even to articulate their own condition. So once we openly discussed that problem, the women accepted it and went on rehearsing in English. This kind of crisis happening during the rehearsal was very important for the making of the film, hence the necessity to bring out, on many levels, the tension between the spoken and the written language.

When you see the texts printed on screen, you see that sometimes the words correspond to what the women are saying, and sometimes they don't. In the shift from the written to the oral, the women have slightly altered them, and these little discrepancies were brought out on screen. This is one of the moments when the women viewers quoted earlier suddenly realized it was a staged speech. And realizing this, they felt that the power of the women's deliveries was taken away from them—the illusion of the authentic kept on leaking here and there. For power to maintain its credibility—or for the "fake" to look "real" as cinema dictates—its workings must remain invisible. So if the speech is visibly a reconstruction, then it is thought that it loses all its power.

**Jayamanne:** You say, "Reading a film is a creative act, and I will continue to make films whose reading I may provoke and initiate but do not control. A film is like a page of paper which I offer the viewer. I am responsible for what is within the boundary of the paper, but I do not control, and do not wish to control, its folding. The viewer can fold it horizontally, obliquely, vertically. They can weave the elements to their liking and background. The interfolding and interweaving situation is what I consider to be most exciting in making films." In relation to that, can you talk about how you





create a structure, more in terms of the montage and mise-en-scène, that facilitates such freedom for the viewer? And is this related to the creation of what you call interstitial space?

**Trinh:** It is a constant challenge to develop this notion of interstitial space, which comes back in every piece of writing I have done. But, to point to one of the more evident aspects of the interval or the interstice, I see the position of women, for example, as being radically difficult. As soon as you move from the position of a named subject into the position of a naming subject, you also have to remain alive to the renewed dangers of arrested meanings and fixed categories—in other words, of occupying the position of a sovereign subject. So, in terms of subject positioning, you can only thrive on fragile ground. You are always working in this precarious space where you are walking right on the edge and challenging both sides so that they cannot simply be collapsed into one. This is the space in between, the interval to which established rules of boundaries never quite apply.

**Jayamane:** How do you fund your films, and what sort of distribution do they have?

**Trinh:** It's a constant struggle. Although I do enjoy teaching, the fact that I have to go on teaching when I would rather just spend my time writing and making films, is because I prefer to continue working as a so-called independent filmmaker and not to have to count on any commercial profit from my films for survival. In the States, the system of grants is such that there is no real support for "the artist." No matter how many films you've made, every time you apply for grants, you start from zero; you have to demonstrate that your project is worthwhile even before you start making it! So what exists is mainly support for "the project." This is somewhat ironic—although hardly surprising—in a context where the claim is overwhelmingly on "individual freedom of expression." There are certainly some advantages to this noncommitted approach to art, but there is no structure here like in Canada, in Europe, or in other parts of the world where once you have made a few films, fundings are facilitated because people trust the fact that you *will* be making films; what, exactly, is up to you.

My films are all distributed by nonprofit organizations—Women Make Movies, Third World Newsreel, and the Museum of Modern Art in New York City; Idera in Vancouver; Cinenova in London; Lightcone in Paris; Image Forum in Tokyo; and the National Library of Australia in Canberra. Since these distributors are motivated by what they believe in rather than merely by monetary profit, my films circulate mainly in film festivals, museums, media arts centers, educational and university networks, as well as different community organizations.

Some people tend to react negatively to such a circuit of distribution, because universities, for example, connote right away privilege, hence a form of narrowness. But needless to say, any person who has been directly involved in media programming today knows that such a concept as "general public" is utterly naive and irresponsible. Some mainstream film directors do not hesitate to affirm, for example, that their audience is exclusively age group 13 to 17. And it is with money power that they promote their films and buy their audiences. I think it is very important to have my films circulate in educational networks, because the classroom is a workplace. And if it is a privileged workplace, it's because this is where changes in the production of knowledge can be effected, where film consumption can be challenged, and where different sensitivities and new forms of subjectivities and resistance are possible.

**Rutherford:** I'd like to ask something about the politics of the film. You spoke [at the festival] about the fact that a lot of people want a film that either supports the North or the South, and you talked about how in the US there is an automatic support for the North that goes back to the anti-war movement. I think there was a confusion or unease about what the position of the film is.

**Trinh:** Well, I see it as a commitment to the feminist struggle more than anything else. When I was asked by anti-communist Vietnamese viewers what the political stance of the film was, I answered that it is the oppression of women which I see as being continuously obscured in many fights for human rights, whether from the Right or from the Left. To say this, of course, is to say nothing new, and yet history seems at times boringly repetitive. The conflict within the feminist struggle among those who believe fights can all be conflated, so that women's liberation comes *de jure* with socialism, and those who see it as a struggle of its own alongside other struggles, is an old conflict. Some called it "the longest revolution," and



there are endless examples of feminists who have moved from the first position to the second one—Simone de Beauvoir was a well-known case.

What the Vietnam revolution has achieved can never be taken away from Vietnam's history. However, what I find most suspicious and deadening is the clinging on to an idealized image of Vietnam 15 years after the war has ended. To hold on to that image is to condemn Vietnam to invisibility. That's what I see happening in most of the spectacular movies recently made on the Vietnam war, as well as in such PBS products as the *Vietnam: A Television History* series. America can't just let it go. So even when the mea-culpa breast-beating is at its height, the tendency is to say that yes, we have sided with the wrong side, but the American people are innocent of the wrong moves of their government. There is an urge to show the American people as being merely manipulated by the government, rather than accepting the fact that it's a mutual responsibility, and that it's no easy task to separate the government from the people.

If people are truly interested in Vietnam, they should be looking more curiously or carefully at what has been happening in the country since the end of the war—how its people fare in trying to cope with the challenge of recovery under the rule of a large postrevolutionary bureaucracy. Listen, for example, to what some of the more farsighted leaders in Vietnam have been publicly admitting in the last few years with regard to what they call their "10 years of mistakes." One has to maintain a critical space in order to contribute to the building anew of one's society. In deadening that space, in trying to reduce and cancel it, one comes to a very dogmatic and, actually, very nostalgic stance. This was what I was trying to avoid in the film.

Above all, the film refuses to subscribe to the prevailing dualistic view of Vietnam. The Vietnam experience has been reduced to a question of communism and anti-communism, whereas its complexities—at least for the Vietnamese—go well beyond these two poles set up by the competition between the two world power blocks. Of great importance for me, then, is to bring forth again the notion of nonalignment as being much more fundamental to the Third World. And it is to this radically nonaligned stance that I relate the women's struggle.

For me, the effort deployed to preserve an ideal image of Vietnam remains extremely paternalistic. I find most problematic the fact that the West would always give itself a space to oppose its governments, while giving no space at all for Third World members to challenge their governments.

**Jayamane:** Despite your criticism of the Vietnamese government, the Vietnamese delegate to the United Nations saw your film and invited you to come to Vietnam to make a film. Are you going to take up that invitation?

**Trinh:** I might, but right now I already have three projects waiting. You don't just go to a country to make a film because someone invites you, but you also have to let the idea of a project mature and to develop a relationship with it; otherwise, you'll be doing just newsreel type of reportage. What is of interest in a film, as I've discussed earlier, does not merely lie in its subject. In other words, why Vietnam? I find it just as important to work on China or on India, for example, which is what I am doing now.

*Laleen Jayamane teaches film studies at the Power Institute of Fine Arts, Sydney University, and has made several films, including A Song of Ceylon. Anne Rutherford is currently teaching film studies at the University of Technology, Sydney. She has also made several short films.*



Still from Trinh T. Minh-ha's newest film, *Shoot for the Contents*.

Courtesy filmmaker

## OUT ON THE TOWN

### Location Agreements and Public Permits

ROBERT SEIGEL

One of the most significant aspects of modern film- and videomaking, especially by independents, is the use of on location sites, or those outside of a studio-constructed environment. But these attempts to incorporate realistic settings have given rise to new problems. Many low-budget producers give the issue of location agreements little attention or simply ignore the need for contracts. But those who do so act at their own peril.



**Distinctive or non-distinctive? To shoot in front of the Pierre Hotel in New York City (which passed for the St. Regis in Whit Stillman's film *Metropolitan*) line producer Brain Greenbaum did not obtain a special release.**

*Courtesy filmmaker*

The reason for a location release or agreement is to protect the film/videomaker from lawsuits brought by individuals or entities upon whose property a project is filmed, or, in the worst case scenario, provide the producer with a defense. Location agreements come into play when shooting on private property. However, if the property is public—such as roads, city streets, parks, and government buildings—a producer still needs to obtain proper permission. This means going to the appropriate statutory authority—generally a state or city film commission or office for motion picture and television development, e.g., the New

York City Office of Film and Theater—to secure a permit. These specifically detail the rights and responsibilities of the film/videomaker and are often contingent upon obtaining production insurance to cover property damage and bodily injury that may occur on the premises during preproduction and production. Producers should contact either municipal or state film commissions for details regarding the policy and procedure for getting insurance coverage and permits.

When shooting occurs on private property, the production company and property owner must enter into a location agreement which outlines their respective rights and responsibilities. One major reason for obtaining a location agreement is to have the property owner waive all or many rights for consideration (which can be as minimal as one dollar).

A key caveat: film- and videomakers are afforded the protection of freedom of expression under the First Amendment. But private individuals and entities also have certain protectable rights, such as the right to privacy, the right against copyright and trademark infringement, the right of publicity, and other rights recognized under civil laws, thereby allowing claims against producers in which the First Amendment may not be an adequate defense. In addition to location agreements, Errors and Omissions (E&O) insurance will help producers deal with such claims. This special type of insurance protects film- and videomakers against claims brought by parties ranging from property owners to those who believe that their work has been used without consent or compensation.

A location agreement generally includes the tentative production title, the names of the production company and property owner and/or authorized agent, the property's specific location, and the compensation to be paid to the property owner (if any), either as a flat fee or on a per shooting or preproduction day basis.

Although location agreements vary, the parties will generally agree that the production company and its employees, agents, contractors, independent contractors, and suppliers have permission to enter and use the premises to record certain scenes during certain production dates. Due to the vagaries of production, a production company should provide itself with some leeway by indicating that any shooting shall "commence on or about" a given date and continue until completion of all scenes and work required.



The production company should specify that it has the right to enter the premises for preparation work prior to a production date at no additional (or at a previously agreed upon) charge. A location agreement should also indicate the production company's right to leave certain props and equipment on the premises so that valuable production time can be saved. In addition, the production company should have the right to use the premises after the production dates for retakes or additional shooting which may be necessary and beyond the production company's control. Such terms as "necessary" and "beyond the production company's control" (e.g. inclement weather) should be discussed when negotiating the location agreement. The agreement should state whether this period is covered by the compensation (if any) agreed upon or whether further pro-rated compensation would be required.

For fictional projects, the agreement must grant the right to incorporate fictional events and characters to a given location. Other pertinent provisions include the right of the production company to place all necessary facilities (e.g., lighting trucks) and equipment (including temporary sets) on the premises. Most location agreements also acknowledge that signs on a property may be removed or changed, provided the producer replaces and restores them. These agreements also state that the company shall leave the premises in as good a condition as when it began to use the premises. Moreover, the production company must agree to use "reasonable care" to prevent damage, and the property owner should be indemnified and "held harmless" from any claims brought by a party based upon personal injury, death, and property damage caused directly from any act of negligence by the production company. One can observe the importance of securing production insurance prior to production, since it is the film/videomaker who will have to reimburse a property owner for any injuries or damages.

Another key provision in location agreements is the right *not* to use the premises. If the property owner is notified prior to the date shooting was to have taken place, neither party should have any obligation to the other and any deposit should be refunded. A set period of time for notification should be stated in the location agreement, since a property owner may have relied on a film/videomaker's promise to use the premises (e.g., a restaurant that closes so a project can be shot there).

Many aspects of a location agreement are judgment calls. If, for instance, a production company with the appropriate permits is shooting property as a "non-distinctive" use—(e.g., a street scene in Queens with generic tenements and a neighborhood bodega)—it may not have to obtain releases for other structures and locations in the same shot. However, if a "distinctive" property is used in the foreground of a shot—a scene in front of Trump Tower, for instance—the producer should obtain a release. Although this is a gray area, a distinctive

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Even though the locations weren't always distinctive, Blue Horse Films obtained location agreements for each site in Monika Treut's *My Father is Coming*, including the front of this 11th Street apartment building in New York's East Village, where the film *The Super* was also shot.

Courtesy filmmaker



use is one where the viewer can observe some identifying part or feature of the property. There are no hard and fast rules for determining this; even if a property is seen for a very short period of time, the audience may still be able to recognize the site. Some properties are so distinctive in nature (e.g., the Plaza Hotel) that it is likely they will be recognized. In such cases a producer should be sure to secure a release. Regardless of whether a shot is inside or outside, it is prudent to obtain releases prior to the time the location is rented.

It is imperative that a film- or videomaker ascertain that the party who is representing him- or herself as the property owner or owner's agent does have the authority to lease the property. If not, then the grant of rights is not binding upon the property owner, who can then bring a claim against a production company. (An E&O policy may not cover this situation if there is any ambiguity in the release or if the production company fails to determine the authority of the rights grantor.) When negotiating with a property owner, the prudent producer should ask for evidence of title to the property. When dealing with an agent, producers should not only ask for proof of an agency relationship to the property owner (e.g. a copy of an agency contract), but also demand to confirm such a relationship (preferably in writing) with the property owner or his or her attorney.

In addition to property rights, the issue of "intangible rights"—e.g., copyright, trademark, and defamation—must be addressed. One of the most basic intellectual property issues that producers must deal with is the use of architectural works found on location. Copyright protection can be afforded only to man-made structures, since a copyright requires a human creator (although a copyright holder may be a non-human entity, such as a partnership or a corporation). Although the extent that a structure is protectable may be unclear, the copyright to an architectural work does not grant the copyright holder the right to prevent the making, distributing, or public display of pictorial representations of the structure, provided it is ordinarily visible from a public place. (Hypothetically, a problem could arise if a producer wanted to photograph architecture on private premises.)

Film- and videomakers should be aware of other copyrightable works that may appear on a location, such as paintings, sculptures, maps, photographs, posters, and other decorative items. If these items are to be used in a project in a manner that could be construed as "distinctive", then the producer should obtain a license from the copyright holder. One should bear in mind that a person may own the physical object (e.g., a painting), but not its copyright, which is generally reserved by the creator.

Other intangible rights include a party's right to privacy, and, in the case of some celebrities, the right to publicity (which gives them control over the commercial exploitation of their name, likeness, and sometimes voice). One's right to privacy can be waived by written consent. However, only a signatory to a location agreement can waive his or her right to privacy (with the exception of spouses and parents who may have the authority to negotiate on behalf of their spouses and children). One should also note that most state privacy laws address the use of one's name, likeness, or image for *commercial* purposes; if a project is a documentary or news program, such use may be considered not for "trade or advertising purposes" and outside the purview of any privacy statute (absent any defamatory or misleading material in such a project).

In order to transfer or waive intangible or intellectual property rights, as well as deal with parties who are not explicitly covered by a location agreement, the agreement should contain a provision in which the property owner agrees to waive any rights of the property owner, his/her family, or other parties whom the owner represents. Moreover, the property owner should agree to waive any rights to privacy, publicity, or defamation claims.

Two final points: a location agreement should have a catch-all provision, in which a property owner promises not to file suit against the production company, whether or not their use of film, video, photographs, and sound recordings taken on location are or could be construed as defamatory, untrue, or censorable in nature.

With the growth of technology and markets within the entertainment industry, a film/ videomaker should be sure to include a provision acknowledging that all rights to all photographs, motion pictures, video, and sound recordings created for the project (including the right to commercially exploit such material) shall be held by the film/ videomaker for "any and all media, whether now known or hereafter devised."

Although most location agreements are generally no more than one or two pages, there are potential pitfalls for the unwary. Such steps as careful scouting and preparation by a production company and its location manager, thorough and candid discussions and negotiations between a production company and a property owner (who should disclose all possible hazards and problematical areas concerning a location, from asbestos to flammable materials), and recognition of potential legal problems can even the already tortuous road of independent film and video production.

*Robert Seigel is an entertainment attorney practicing in New York City who writes widely on legal and business issues affecting independent producers.*



## PREGNANT WITH DREAMS

### Julia Barco's Feminist Visions from Latin America

CATHERINE SAALFIELD

Julia Barco is a film and video jack-of-all-trades, representing the best of versatile, critical, cultural activists. Her work rigorously confronts the personal and the political, each project contributing to a larger inquiry, each recording challenging the position of women in society, particularly in Mexico. Raising vital questions about how Latin American communities construct and perpetuate identity, Barco examines how historically embattled and underrepresented groups can speak through the media to claim their past and assert their present.

Barco grew up in Colombia, which had only an incipient film industry at that time. She received her masters degree from MIT in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and then spent the early eighties as a filmmaker at the Institute of Sociological Research at the University of Oaxaca, Mexico. In 1984, Barco became director of the newly formed Audio-Visual Department at Mexico's Universidad Autónoma Benito Juárez de Oaxaca (UABJO), where she designed projects that develop the use of media in teaching and research, refined her technical skills, and intensified her commitment to independent media production. She currently writes, directs, shoots, and edits her own documentaries on topics ranging from gender and cultural identity in Zapotec communities, to the seasonal migration of a Mixteca community in Oaxaca, Mexico. For the last decade, Barco has been a dynamic presence at festivals, seminars, conferences, and feminist Encuentros all over the Americas and in Spain. She spoke with me at her home in Mexico City and revealed the dominant components of her impressive mission.

Barco consistently tapes women's workshops, demonstrations, and conferences with an under-

standing of mass media omissions. "Otherwise," she points out, "it's all just lost. So, I take video notes, recording what women—feminists in particular—are doing, hoping later to make tapes." The women represented are not only educated, urban, middle-class feminists, but also those who are reshaping gender roles and fighting for their own personal and ethnic survival in rural and coastal areas. The majority of her work takes place outside of Mexico City in small, indigenous villages around the country.

*El Parto Siempre Ha Sido Natural (Childbirth Has Always Been Natural, 1989)* is a 42-minute documentary about midwives from the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, a southern region. As director and camerawoman, Barco creates a lively texture of talking-head interviews. Midwives from the countryside speak comfortably about their calling, while they prepare to bake dinner in a brick oven, tend to a baby woken by sun streaming through spaces in the wall of a shack, or sit on stools in their dirt-floored homes. Faced with a financially limited production schedule and minimal shooting conditions, Barco is clearly at ease with her hand-held camera and mid-shot focusing.

"I never used a tripod until May of this year," says Barco. "I want to be able to move and react." Customarily, she also shies away from voiceover

narration. Barco explains, "It's like a tripod; I never use it. I feel it distances unless it's personal." Perceptive and responsive, the seductive camera movement that characterizes the majority of her work complements the subject matter. In *El Parto*, many times someone off-camera will chime in, and the image will gently pan across the room to find a sister, daughter, or neighbor busy patting out tortillas or bathing an infant. The shots, along with the sounds of whistling, music, and crisp dialogue, reflect the physicality of conversation, and carefully edited gestures resonate with the midwives' profound understanding of their sensual relationships to the female body. One woman's hand caresses her own stomach, as she swings slowly in a hammock, demonstrating the massage used to determine the fetus' position. This scene reveals both the midwives' professional competence and the intimacy and trust between subject and filmmaker. Such shots are woven together to form a powerful argument for self-determination and to illustrate respect for a long tradition of natural childbirth.

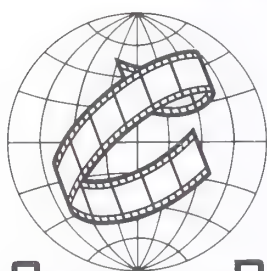
A collaborative project, *El Parto* originated with women from the Grupo de Estudios Regionales in Oaxaca. They were researching the use of herbs for women's health care in order to recuperate age-old knowledge, much of which is lost.

*Pregnant with Dreams* is one of many documentaries by Julia Barco which investigate gender and cultural identity among Latin American women.

Courtesy Women Make Movies







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Representative of her formative work at the UABJO, *Mero Ikootsa-Verdaderos Nosotros* (*Pure Ikootsa- Truly Us*, 1982) and *Agarro Camino* (*Agarro Road*, 1984) are based on sociological studies conducted at the Institute. Barco remembers, "[The faculty] wanted to get new research out in a different way than in papers, in order to reach a broader public." In 1985 she directed her last piece in association with the university, *Vela: Tradición y Cambio en Juchitan* (*Vela: Tradition and Change in Juchitan*), part of a series of interchanges between UABJO and the University of Northern Colorado. The annual Vela celebration clearly illustrates the complicated interplay of modern Western culture, indigenous customs, and inherited Spanish religious rites in the formation of ethnic identity. With these pieces, Barco shaped a personal style which relies less on formal technique than on visceral involvement and genuine attention to the material at hand.

The real gem of her oeuvre is a lesser known super 8 short made in 1980 called *Totoperas*. The women of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec make a particular form of hard tortilla called totopos, which resists spoilage. At the time, Barco was living with Zapotec women in this area. "I felt there was much to learn about how women there deal with their reality," she recalls. "They are very strong and independent." The result is a rich and beautiful piece, saturated with light beaming into shacks through bamboo and the sounds of laughing, barking dogs, and the clapping of tortillas. The women flirt with each other and the filmmaker, and the tape is laced with playful double entendres, giggles, and song. The piece closes with a fiesta, where, according to tradition, women happily dance together and the men talk among themselves on the periphery.

*Totoperas* has been rarely screened, since Barco encountered theoretical and political challenges shared by many independents. Two significant obstacles stood in the way. The first was technical—Barco was unable to share the material with the women featured in the film since projectors are hard to come by. This was a self-defeating circumstance, because the director believes strongly in the dialogue and exchange inherent in work that crosses geographic and cultural borders. "So, I also used a Polaroid," Barco remarks. "You can leave photos, but it's difficult to leave a film in the same way. Now video is changing this."

Secondly, she struggled with issues of privacy and authority wrapped up in documentary film- and videomaking. Barco remarks, "You have to be conscious that at times—no matter how much time is spent talking projects over, and even when the taping is requested—it is still possible that, because of differences in their relationship to media, the meaning of participation in a tape is different for those involved at different ends." On the other hand, she offers, "As part of a tradition of Latin American filmmakers, those of us who have had access to film- and videomaking technique have a commitment to try and give voice to

those who don't. I felt a responsibility and urgency to record and, thus, preserve, primarily for those involved, testimony about acute situations and ways of living which are often violently being affected." The present ideal, as reflected in Barco's activities, "is to try and give facilities and training to people so they can make their own media. It's a closing of the circle and video, again, is making this more feasible."

Production training is just one way Barco helps close the circle. Another is by acting on women's need to show and distribute work and establish networks of professional peers. Unlike in her previous experiences in Colombia and Oaxaca, Barco is now surrounded by a whole generation of women her age working in media production in Mexico City, where there are two film schools. (Film schools and university departments have been established in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Panama, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela.) Recognizing the need for producers to meet, talk, and see each other's work, Barco helped organize the first Latin American women's film and video festival in 1987 called *Cocina de Imágenes* (Kitchen of Images) [see "Unofficial Stories: Documentaries by Latinas and Latin American Women," May 1989]. The hugely successful two-week event included work from 11 countries and Puerto Rico.

Barco helps produce and circulate video recordings of similar gatherings, significantly broadening the range of women reached. While there is an informal network of women in Latin America with access to these videos, Barco's work is rarely seen in the United States. Acting the ambitious producer, she initially tried to self-distribute *Preñadas de Sueños* (*Pregnant with Dreams*), a 45-minute documentary about the fourth Encuentro Feminista Latinoamericano y del Caribe (1988). She eventually found the cost of dubbing and postage to be prohibitively expensive, and Women Make Movies subsequently picked up the tape for distribution. Already the piece has been acquired for collections around the US and is used in many colleges' women's studies and international development courses.

In this video document, conversations about the pros and cons of monogamy are intercut with examinations of global patriarchy. Women debate issues ranging from sexuality and colonization, to contraception and the definition of feminism. Workshop discussions carry into after-dinner deliberations over beer on the right to dream, the value of utopian thinking, and the reality of capitalist power. One woman insists, "These [Nicaraguan] women come [to Mexico] from their country with these ideas. That, to me, means there is the desire to change. There is a glimpse of change. So, this [meeting] is an example of a revolution that wants to change structures and also wants to change daily life." The same could be said for Julia Barco and her persistence of vision.

*Catherine Saalfeld, who spent three months in Mexico last year, is a media activist and writer.*



## Domestic

**ANN ARBOR FILM FESTIVAL**, Mar. 17-22. Oldest 16mm fest in country celebrates 30th anniv. w/ conference, Thirty Years & Beyond: Celebrating the Independent Filmmaker. Held prior to fest from Mar. 13-16, conf. will feature award-winning filmmakers from past fests in workshops, discussions & screenings. Fest open to ind. & experimental films that "demonstrate a high regard for film as creative medium." No formal cats. 3-person awards jury distributes \$7,000 in prize money, incl. Best of Fest (\$1,500); \$500 each to best animated/experimental films; Michael Moore Award to best doc. (\$500); Tom Berman Award (\$1,250); Lawrence Kasdan Award (\$500); Peter Wilde Award (\$500); Marvin Felheim Award (\$500). Nat'l tour (August through July) consists of 4 hrs of winners & highlights of fest; rental fee paid to participating films. Entry fee: \$25 (\$30 foreign). Format: 16mm; prescreening on film only. Deadline: Feb. 15. Contact: Vicki Honeyman, fest director, Ann Arbor Film Festival, Box 8232, Ann Arbor, MI 48107; (313) 995-5356.

**BIRMINGHAM EDUCATIONAL FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL**, April, AL. Goal of 20-yr-old fest is to promote use of film/video as educational tool. Cats: business/commerce; early childhood/elementary ed.; environmental issues; fine & performing arts; geography/history; guidance & counseling; health ed./physical ed.; human resources/management & development in workplace; independent & student prods; language & communication arts; literature; math & science; philosophy & religion; political science; social science; teacher/career ed.; technology. Awards: best of festival; Silver Electra (best of 16mm, video); best of cat; finalists (certificate of award); Cecil Roberts Lifetime Achievement Award. Entries should be no longer than 60 min. Entry fee: \$25-60. Formats: 16mm, 1/2". Deadline: Jan. 15. Contact: Victoria Baxter, exec. dir., Birmingham International Educational Film Festival, Box 2641, Birmingham, AL 35291-0665; (205) 250-2711.

**CAROLINA FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL**, Mar. 19-21, NC. Held at Univ. of N. Carolina, Greensboro, fest celebrates art of film & video, showcasing outstanding student & ind. prods. Docs, narratives, experimental & animated works accepted. Jury awards prize money totalling over \$2,500. Entry fee: \$15; \$5 students. Formats: 16mm, super 8, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Mar. 1. Contact: Michael Frierson, Carolina Film & Video Festival, Broadcasting/Cinema Div., Carmichael Bldg., UNC-Greensboro, Greensboro, NC 27412; (919) 334-5360.

**LOS ANGELES ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL**, May, CA. Sponsored by Visual Communications & UCLA Film & TV Archive, 7-yr-old fest highlights cinematic expression by Asian Pacific American filmmakers and Asian/Pacific Rim int'l productions. Eligible films incl. shorts & features in cats: dramatic/narrative, doc., experimental, graphic film/animation, 1-channel videoworks, NTSC-format works. No entry fee. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, super 8; preview on cassette. Deadline: Jan. 31. Contact: Abraham Ferrer, coordinator, Los Angeles Asian Pacific American Int'l Film & Video Festival, Visual Communications, 263 S. Los Angeles St., Ste. 307, Los Angeles, CA 90012; (213) 680-4462; fax: (213) 687-4848.

**NEW ANGLE INTERMEDIA VIDEO FESTIVAL**, May, NY. Int'l noncompetitive showcase for experi-mental

**This month's festivals have been compiled by Kathryn Bowser, director of the FIVE Festival Bureau. Listings do not constitute an endorsement. Since some details change faster than we do, we recommend that you contact the festival for further information before sending prints or tapes. In order to improve our reliability and make this column more beneficial to independents, we encourage all film- and videomakers to contact FIVE Festival Bureau with their personal festival experiences, positive and negative.**

videotapes under 30 min. Entry fee: \$25. Format: 3/4"; preview on 1/2" only. Deadline: Feb. 1. Contact: Myrna Schloss, Angle Intermedia, 300 Mercer St., #11N, New York, NY 10003; (212) 228-8307.

**NEW YORK NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL**, Feb. 22, NY. Created to provide visibility for high school film- & videomakers, this fest debuts this yr to "show that high schoolers have their own unique visions & have the ability to illustrate them in compelling ways." Anyone 18 or under is eligible. Cats: film live-action, video live-action, animation, doc. Awards given to best entry in each cat. Each filmmaker also receives written evaluation of work from jury of students & film industry. Entry fee: \$10. Formats: 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Feb. 1. Contact: Zachary Levy, festival director, NYC National High School Film & Video Festival, Trinity School, 101 W. 91st St., New York, NY 10024; (212) 876-5727.

**NEW DIRECTORS/NEW FILMS**, Mar., NY. Prestigious fest est. in 1972 surveys world cinema to capacity audiences at Museum of Modern Art. Dedicated to discovery of new & unrecognized narrative features, docs & shorts. 20-25 programs w/ entries from 15 countries last yr; no specific cats. Shorts programmed w/ features. Entries must be NY premieres. Cosponsored by MoMA's Dept. of Film & Film Society of Lincoln Center, which presents NY Film Festival. No entry fee; entrants pay shipping. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 3/4" & 1/2". Deadline: Jan. 6. Contact: New Directors/New Films, Film Society of Lincoln Center, 70 Lincoln Center Plaza, New York, NY 10023-6595; (212) 875-5610; fax: (212) 875-5636.

**RETIREMENT RESEARCH FOUNDATION NATIONAL MEDIA AWARDS**, May, IL. Competition for outstanding films, videos & TV programs that address issues related to aging, capture authentic images of older persons & illuminate challenge & promise of an aging society. Entries must deal primarily w/ concerns of interest to aged people or those working in field of aging. Cats: ind. film & video; TV & theatrical fiction film (drama or comedy); TV nonfiction; training films & videos. Awards: first prize: \$5,000, Owl statuette; 2nd prize:

\$1,000, plaque; honorable mention: \$500, plaque to 2 films; community video award: in TV nonfiction cat. only, \$2,000 & Owl statuette; special achievement award: \$5,000, Owl statuette. Entries must be produced in US & released or initially televised betw. Jan. 1 & Dec. 31, 1991. No entry fee. Formats: 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Feb. 4. Contact: Ray Bradford, RRF National Media Awards, Center for New Television, 1440 N. Dayton, Chicago, IL 60622; (312) 951-6868.

**VIDEO SHORTS**, March, WA. Competition for videos 6-min. & under. Cash honoraria of \$100 to 10 winners. Jurying takes place during ArtStorm, annual Downtown Seattle Assoc.-sponsored midwinter arts fest. Fest requires winners to grant fest nonexclusive rights to use & distribute winning works as touring show & for educational & archival purposes, returning 50% of net proceeds to producers. Entry fee: \$15. Formats: 3/4", 3/4" SP, 1/2", 8mm, hi-8. Deadline: Feb. 1. Contact: Mike Cady, Video Shorts, Box 20369, Seattle, WA 98102; (206) 325-8449.

**WOW (WOMEN ONE WORLD) CAFE WOMEN'S FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL**, Mar. 26-Apr. 11, NY. Now in 5th yr, noncompetitive fest shows rarely seen & new works by women, incl. experimental & doc. films & videos, mostly shorts, of any genre & on any topic. No PSAs, training material, or promotional work. WOW is women-run experimental theater collective. Entry fee: \$10. Formats: 16mm, 3/4"; preview on 1/2". Deadline: Dec. 30. Contact: Harriet Hirshorn/Mary Patierno, WOW Festival, 151 1st Ave., Suite W, New York, NY 10003; (212) 674-4736.

## Foreign

**KIJKHUIS WORLDWIDE VIDEO FESTIVAL**, Apr. 7-12, Netherlands. One of major int'l events for ind. video, now in its 10th yr. All genres accepted; videoclips, film transferred to video, performance recordings, theater, or music ineligible. Entries must be completed before 1990. Formats: 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Dec. 15. Contact: Kijkhuis, Noordeinde 140, 2514 GP, The Hague, Netherlands; tel: (31) 70-3644805; fax: (31) 70-3614448.

**LONDON LESBIAN AND GAY FILM FESTIVAL**, Mar. 20-31, United Kingdom. Now in 6th yr., fest presents over 100 films & videos from throughout world. Fest aims to present new work by lesbian & gay producers "alongside other films & videos of particular interest for lesbian/gay content or for imaginative way in which they address themes of sexuality and gender." Format: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4"; preview on cassette. Contact: Paula Jalfon, London Lesbian & Gay Film Festival, National Film Theatre, South Bank, Waterloo, London SE1 8XT, UK; tel: (071) 928-3535; fax: (071) 633-9323.

## FIVE TAPE LIBRARY

The FIVE Festival Bureau has established a tape library of members' current works to expedite screenings for upcoming film and video festivals. Members interested in depositing work in the library should contact: Kathryn Bowser, Festival Bureau director, FIVE, 625 Broadway, 9th floor, NY, NY 10012, (212) 473-3400. 1/2" and 3/4" tapes will be accepted.



## Buy ■ Rent ■ Sell

**SEEKING NEW WORKS** for educational and health care markets, Fanlight Productions distributes films/videos in areas of health, sociology, psychology, etc. Brenda Shanley, Fanlight Productions, 47 Halifax St., Boston, MA 02130. (617) 524-0980.

**PRODUCTION OFFICE FURNITURE/PHONES** for sale. Merlin & other phones, answering machines, desks, chairs, file cabinets, lamps, shelves, computer table, intercom, etc. Moving in Jan. (212) 533-3835.

**KODAK REVERSAL CLOSEOUT:** 7250, 7251, 7239, 7241, 7242, 7266, 7291. 400' and 1200' loads, \$47.50 and \$139.50 each. Bill Gonzalez, Visionworks. (517) 339-9943.

**STEENBECK ST 900**, 6-plate flatbed, early model, great condition. Needs 220 volt line. Ideal for indie filmmaker! Cash and carry at \$750 or best offer. Call VooDoo Peep Productions. (212) 685-0080.

**MINT CONDITION:** Elmo GS1200 super 8mm dual channel sound, film projector and Elmo 912/s sound editor for sale. \$1,000 for both or best offer. Mark (713) 622-5515.

**USED EQUIPMENT:** Pro Video & Film specializes in quality used equip. 44 yrs exp. Money back guarantee. Quarterly catalog. We buy, sell, trade, consign, locate & appraise. Pro Video & Film Equipment Group. Dallas. (214) 869-0011; fax: (214) 869-0145.

**SONY 3/4" EDITING PKG:** 1 Sony VO 2860A edit recorder; 1 Sony VO 2600 edit player; 1 Sony RM 440 edit controller; 2 JVC TM41AU color monitors; 1 cart for package. Asking \$3,000 or best offer. (718) 965-0268.

**WANTED:** High-quality video footage of volcanos, lava, fireworks, etc. to lease or buy—3/4", hi-8, or SVHS format. P. Singletary, Ste. 341, 2170 Broadway, NYC 10024. (212) 873-5857.

**FOR RENT:** Sony 5850 edit system, \$400/week in home + free funding consult! Hi-8 camera w/ award-winning shooter, \$250/shoot (multiday). Want cobuyer for Betacam SP deck/cam. & Ike 79; comic writer, coproducer & intern for Ben & Jerry's TV special/book. (212) 727-8637.

## Preproduction

**CREW NEEDED** for indie feature. Cameraperson, pref. w/ own camera, sound person w/ own equip. Gaffers, grips, PAs, electricians, lighting truck, art dir., makeup. Deferred pay, stipends. Send reel/resume w/ SASE. TGOM Prods., Box 2011, NY, NY 10013-2011.

**SCREENPLAYS WANTED.** Low-budget producer looking for screenplays about the "black life." Write for more information. Mecca Motion Pictures, 2980 Cobb Parkway, Suite 192218, Atlanta, GA 30339.

**NON-COMEDY SCRIPTS** needed for low-budget film production company. Send treatment and script. Bart Lawson, Suite 4811, Empire State Bldg, New York, NY 10118.

**THE SCREENPLAY DOCTOR & the Movie Mechanic:** Professional story analysts/postprod. specialists will analyze your screenplay or treatment & evaluate your film-in-progress. Major studio & indie background. Reasonable rates. (212) 219-9224.

**Each entry in the Classifieds column has a 250-character limit & costs \$20 per issue. Ads exceeding this length will be edited. Payment must be made at the time of submission. Anyone wishing to run a classified more than once must pay for each insertion & indicate the number of insertions on the submitted copy. Each classified must be typed, double-spaced & worded exactly as it should appear. Deadlines are the 8th of each month, two months prior to the cover date (e.g. January 8 for the March issue). Make check or money order—no cash, please—payable to FIVE, 625 Broadway, 9th floor, New York, NY 10012.**

## Freelancers

**HESSION-ZIEMAN PRODUCTIONS:** Betacam & betacam SP field prod. crew for docs, commercials, music videos, public relations, dance, etc. Sony BVW507 camcorder w/ full lighting, sound & grip pkg. Experienced DP. (212) 529-1254.

**MUSIC**—Experienced composer/producer w/ fully equipped studio seeks film & video projects to score. Call T.K. Music (212) 956-3931.

**DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** avail. for dramatic 16 or 35mm productions of any length. Credits include *Metropolitan*. Call to see my reel. John Thomas (201) 783-7360.

**BETACAM SP:** Award-winning cameraman w/ BVW 507 field pkg will work w/in your budget. Equip. pkg incl. Vinten tripod, DP kit, wide angle lens, Neuman KMR81, Lavs & Toyota 4-Runner. BVP7/BVW 35 pkg avail. & full postprod. services. Hal (201) 662-7526.

**DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** w/ Aaton XTR pkg incl. Zeiss, Nikkor & video tap; avail. in Pacific Northwest. Camera can rent separately. Call Lars: (206) 632-5496.

**BETACAM PKG** (reg. or SP) w/ tripod, lights, mics, shotgun & van avail. Award-winning cameraman & crew avail. Fast & reliable. Broadcast quality. Call Eric (718) 389-7104.

**CAMERAMAN** w/ equip. Credits incl. 4 features (35 & 16mm), news & doc (CBS, BBC, PBS), ads, industrials & music vids. 16mm & Betacam pkgs w/ lights, mics, crew & van. Strong visual sense. Personable & reasonable rates. Call for demo. Eric (718) 389-7104.

**BETACAM SP & 3/4"** production pkgs, incl. Vinten tripod, monitor, full lighting & audio wireless & car. 3/4" editing w/ Chyron & digital effects. Video duplication

to & from 3/4" & VHS. Call Adam (212) 319-5970.

**AWARD-WINNING CAMERAMAN** w/ 16mm ACL II and Betacam looking for challenging projects. Partial client list: ABC Sports, IBM, LIRR, Pitney Bowes, Wilderness Society. Complete crews avail., incl. sound & grip pkgs. Reasonable rates. Call Mike (718) 352-1287.

**HOME OR ABROAD:** Prod. company w/ int'l exp. fully outfitted w/ compact Sony hi-8 gear/film-style audio ready to work in far & distant lands. Can take your project from preprod. through the final edit. Call Dan (212) 628-0178.

**CINEMATOGRAPHER** looking for interesting projects. Owner of Arri 16SR & other camera & lighting equipment. Reasonable rates. Call Ralph (718) 284-0223.

**ARTIST/AWARD-WINNING FILMMAKER** seeks director of photography w/ experimental background; line producer &/or coproducer for independent feature film project. Call (718) 857-9753, days.

**SHOOT!** Sony broadcast pkg for rent. Includes Sony DVC 3000 CCD camera w/ Fujinon 12X lens, AC adapter & tripod. BVU-110 w/ AC & batts. Battery charger, Omni light kit, stands & mic. (718) 392-6058.

**STEADICAM** for film & video. Special rates for independents. Call Sergei Franklin (212) 228-4254.

**BETACAM SP:** Sony BVW 530, Satchler Video 20, Lowell Omni-kit, Sony mics, \$450/day. Same but 3/4" SP or Betacam, \$350/day. Ike 730A & BVU110 w/ TC, \$175/day. Betacam or 3/4" SP to 3/4" SP cuts w/ Amiga 2000, \$50/hr. Electronic Visions (212) 691-0375.

**HI-8 CAM PKG** w/ experienced cameraperson: 3-chip Sony DXC-325/EVV-9000, full accessories incl. lights, mikes, mixer & LCD monitor. \$550/day, shorter & longer rates negotiable. Call Robbie at (718) 783-8432.

**TOP FLIGHT COMPOSER** w/ extensive prod. experience, fluent in all styles, avail. for dramatic, doc., or commercial projects. Well-equipped Midi Studio. Call/write for demo. Phil Rubin Music, 157 W. 57th Street #500, New York, NY 10019. (212) 956-0800.

**GERMAN CINEMATOGRAPHER**, award-winning, available in New York area. Owner of 16mm Aaton package. Will travel. Wolfgang Held (212) 620-0029.

**LOCATION SOUND RECORDIST** w/ Sony digital recorder & top quality mics. Reasonable rates. Call Todd Reckson (212) 995-2247.

**MUSIC & SOUND DESIGN:** Independent composer, experienced, state-of-the-art equipment, available to score &/or design sound effects for your film/video production. Call Septicemic Productions (212) 685-0080.

## Postproduction

**COZY & CHEAP:** 3/4" off-line editing room w/ new Sony 5850, 5800, RM440. \$500/week for a 5-day week. 24-hr access, midtown location. Call Jane at (212) 929-4795 or Deborah at (212) 226-2579.

**BOB BRODSKY & TONI TREADWAY:** Super 8 & 8mm film-to-video mastering w/ scene-by-scene color correction to 1", Betacam & 3/4". By appointment only. Call (617) 666-3372. **16MM EDITING ROOM** for daily, weekly, or monthly rentals. 6-plate Steenbeck w/ fast rewind. Clean, safe, East Village, 24-hr access. Best



rates in town. Call Su at (212) 475-7186 or (718) 782-1920.

**DAILIES IN SYNC DAILY:** 16 or 35mm prepared overnight for coding or transfer to tape—unconditionally guaranteed. P/u & deliv. avail—\$25/400' cr. Call NY's only downtown dailies service (212) 431-9289.

**OFF-LINE** in comfort & privacy w/ or w/out editor on a JVC hi-fi VHS system. Can make window dub transfers from Betacam, hi-8, or 3/4" to hi-fi VHS. Call Dan at EDITIT! (212) 628-0178.

**TOTAL SUPER 8 SOUND** film services. All s-8 prod., postprod., editing, sync sound, mix, multitrack, single & double system sound editing, transfers, stills. Send SASE for rate sheet or call Bill Creston, 727 6th Ave., New York, NY 10010; (212) 924-4893.

**SUPER OFF-LINE RATE:** 2 Sony 3/4" w/ RM 450 edit controller, mixer, mic., \$15/hr, \$100/day, \$400/wk. Midtown location, quiet, comfortable, private room. (212) 997-1464.

**16MM EDITING ROOM & OFFICE** space for rent in suite of indies. Fully equipped w/ 6-plate Steenbeck & 24-hr access. All windowed & new carpet. Located at W. 24th St. & 7th Ave. Reasonable rates. Call Jeff at Film Partners (212) 714-2313.

**16MM CUTTING ROOMS:** 8-plate & 6-plate fully equipped rooms, sound transfer facilities, 24-hr access. Downtown, near all subways & Canal St. Reasonable, negotiable rates. (212) 925-1500.

**NEW MATCHBACK:** 3/4" SP TC editing w/ Sony 9800, 9850 & RM 450: \$12/hr, \$100/day, \$500/wk. Film room w/ KEM 6-plate (35mm, 16mm, or s-8). Sound transfers w/ Dolby SR to 16 or 35 mag, \$25/hr. Call (212) 685-6283.

**3/4" OFF-LINE SYSTEM** for rent. Cut at your location. Sony 9800/9850 decks (SP w/ Dolby & XLR output), RM 450 controller, Tascam 6-channel mixer w/ amp & speakers, 13" monitors w/ blue & underscan, TC reader. Long/short-term rental. (718) 392-6058.

**BARGAIN VHS OFF-LINE:** \$10/hr rate w/ JVC system, private, airy room in comfortable home-office suite, accessible Park Slope, Brooklyn location. Experienced editor also available. Call Robbie at (718) 783-8432.

**WHY LEAVE HOME?** Edit in Brooklyn. Beautiful, spacious, private 3/4" suite available in Park Slope. Equipped w/ Sony 5800 & 5850 decks, RM 440 controller and brand new 13" Trinitron monitors. \$500/wk; \$100/day. Call Deirdre (718) 638-0028.

**NEGATIVE MATCHING:** 16 or 35mm. 40 years experience, all work guaranteed! Will beat any competitor's price. Video matchback to the AVID 1 Composer. Northeast Negative Matchers, Inc. (413) 736-2177 or (800) 370-CUTS.

**OFF-LINE AT HOME!** Will rent 2 Sony 5850s w/ RM 440 or RM 450 edit controller and monitors. Low monthly rates, \$650/week. Answer your own phone & cut all night if you like! John (212) 245-1364 or 529-1254.

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## Conferences ■ Seminars

**WOMEN MAKE MOVIES:** 9-part workshop series for women film- & videomakers in areas of fundraising, scheduling, accounting, shooting & securing rights. Saturdays, 12 pm-4 pm, Oct.-May. \$50/\$40 members per workshop; \$350/\$275 for series. Contact: Women Make Movies, 225 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10012; (212) 925-0606; fax: (212) 925-2052.

## Films ■ Tapes Wanted

**THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE** seeks hour-long films & videos which offer unique perspectives on historical material. Contact: Llew Smith, series editor, *The American Experience*, WGBH, 125 Western Ave., Boston, MA 02134; (617) 492-2777, ext. 4313.

**BLACK ENTERTAINMENT TELEVISION** seeks videos & films by black ind. filmmakers for *Screen Scene*. Send treatments, permission to air, photos & 5-min. segments on broadcast-quality tape to: *Screen Scene*, Black Entertainment Television, 1899 9th St., NE, Washington DC 20018; (202) 636-2400.

**CINEMA GUILD** seeks docs, TV programs & special interest videos on variety of subjects for distribution in worldwide nontheatrical, home video & TV markets. Send VHS preview tapes to: Gary Crowds, Cinema Guild, 1697 Broadway, New York, NY 10019; (212) 246-5522.

**COMEDY CENTRAL** seeks clips from community access programmers for *Access America*. Contact: Comedy Central, 314 Clifton Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55403; (612) 871-4901.

**DEEP DISH TV** seeks works for 1992 season that place quinqucentenary celebrations in a critical context. Tapes of any style, format, or genre. Experimental and non-English language works welcome. Special project proposal deadline: Jan. 15. Tape description deadline for fall '92: April 1. Contact: Programming dir., Deep Dish TV, 339 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10012; (212) 473-8933; fax: (212) 420-8223.

**FLAGSHIP CHANNEL**, Univ. of Maryland's educational access station, seeks doc., animation, experimental & other original prods. No fees. Send VHS or 3/4" tapes. Contact: Dan Kolb, Flagship Channel, 0304 Benjamin Bldg., Univ. of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742; (301) 405-3610.

**FORUM GALLERY** seeks works by Scandinavian video and filmmakers for art exhibition of contemporary Scandinavian art, craft & design. Open to artists living abroad or in US. Contact: Dan Talley or Michelle Henry, Forum Gallery, 525 Falconer Street, Jamestown, NY 14701; (716) 665-9107.

**HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN** Film Museum seeks film & video prods based on writings of Andersen to include in int'l nonprofit film library. Contact: The Hans Christian Andersen Film Library, c/o Chris Fraft-Christensen, Hjugets Kvarter 350 C, DK-5220 Odense Sø, Denmark; tel: (45) 66 15 44 82.

**HUNGARIAN TELEVISION** invites filmmakers to submit off-beat works for use in 30-min. & 1-hr programs. Small negotiable acquisition fee. Send film description to: Andras Kepes, senior producer, Anchor, Magyar Televizio, 1810 Budapest, Hungary; tel: 36 1 153 3200.

**IMAGE UNION**, program for ind. producers, seeks experimental, narrative, doc., animation & comedy

**Notices are listed free of charge. AIVF members receive first priority; others are included as space permits. The Independent reserves the right to edit for length. Deadlines for Notices will be respected. These are the 8th of the month, two months prior to cover date (e.g., January 8 for the March issue). Send to: Independent Notices, FIVF, 625 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.**

works. \$25/min. for 25-min. max.-length program. Send 3/4" tapes to: Jamie Caesar, WTTW, 5400 N. St. Louis Ave., Chicago, IL 60625; (312) 583-5000.

**NEW AMERICAN MAKERS**, distributor for Opera Plaza theater & cable channel 25, seeks tapes with strong personal vision. Small fee paid. Send VHS preview tapes. Contact: New American Makers, Box 460490, San Francisco, CA 94146; (415) 695-2904.

**THE 90's**, alternative cable & public TV series reaching 500,000 households, seeks work from ind. producers. Contact: Laura Brenton, The 90's, Box 6060, Boulder, CO 80306; fax/phone: (303) 442-6472.

**PERALTA COLLEGES TELEVISION**, East Bay cultural & educational cable channel, seeks original works. Submit tapes, pref. 3/4". Contact: Programming director, Peralta Colleges TV, 900 Fallon St., Oakland, CA 94607; (415) 464-3253.

**SOUTH CAROLINA ARTS COMMISSION** seeks film/video artists for 1992-93 Southern Circuit tour. 6 artists travel 10 days to 8 southern sites & present 1 show per city. Artists chosen from semifinal pool of 40. Send VHS, 3/4", or 16mm film of at least 45 min. Deadline: Jan. 15. Contact: Susan Leonard, director media exhibitions, SCAC, Media Arts Center, 1800 Gervais St., Columbia, SC 29201.

**VIDEO PROJECT**, distributor of educational films & videos, seeks work on global concerns. Contact: Peter Epstein, marketing director, Video Project, 5332 College Ave., Suite 101, Oakland, CA 94618; (415) 655-9050.

## Opportunities ■ Gigs

**NY COUNCIL FOR THE HUMANITIES** speakers program invites scholars living or working in New York to present single 1-hr humanities lectures for public audiences. \$250 honorarium per lecture plus travel/lodging reimbursement. Submit 6 copies of short (250 word max.) description of lecture & resumé, plus 1 recommendation letter under separate cover. Deadline: January 24, 1992. Contact: NY Council for the Humanities, 198 Broadway, 10th fl., NY, NY 10038.

**OHIO UNIVERSITY** seeks 1 or 2 individuals to fill

Instructor or Assistant Professor positions in video &/or audio production, beg. Fall 1992. Req: appropriate academic degree w/ extensive professional exp. \$25,000-\$35,000 for 9-mo. academic year. Send letter, CV & 3 refs. by Dec. 15 to: Dr. David Mould, School of Telecommunications Search Committee, Rm. 219 Radio-TV Bldg., Ohio Univ., Athens, OH 45701.

**TRANSLATORS AND TRANSCRIBERS** sought to work on Spanish-language interview footage. Familiarity w/ Paisa dialect & interest in postprod. a plus. Contact: Mario Chioldi, Empty Sea Prods, 414 W. 49th St., Suite 5D, New York, NY 10019.

**VIDEO MAKER** sought by Univ. Calif. at Irvine for tenured associate professor position, beg. Sept. 1992. Teaching exp. & extensive work in contemporary visual arts required. Send statement of teaching philosophy, adequate representation of prod., 4 recommendation letters & SASE before Jan. 3. Contact: Catherine Lord, Dept. of Studio Art, Univ. of Calif., Irvine, CA 92717.

**UNIV. OF WISCONSIN-MADISON** seeks individuals to fill assistant professor positions in TV studies, video prod. & communications to begin Fall 1992. Competency in theory & practice required. Advanced degree in communication arts or related area & scholarship essential. Send vitae, 3 letters of recommendation & samples of work by Dec. 10. Contact: Professor Vance Kopley, Dept. of Communication Arts, 6110 Vilas Hall, Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, WI 53706.

## Publications

**ALTERNATIVE PRESS INDEX:** quarterly subject index to alternative publications. Libraries \$125; individuals & movement groups \$30. 1991-92 *Directory of Alternative & Radical Publications* avail. for \$4. Contact: Alternative Press Center, Box 33109, Baltimore, MD 21218.

**FOUNDATION CENTER** offers *Grant Guides* in 30 subjects, *Foundation Grants Index & Foundation Grants Index Quarterly*. Orders & info.: (800) 424-9836.

**GULLIVER GERMAN-ENGLISH YEARBOOK** seeks scholars familiar w/ exile cultures & emigré writers in the US, plus titles of creative work (e.g., films/videos, poetry, theater, etc.) relevant to these groups for its 1992 edition, *The Half-Open Door: Refugees, Immigrants, and Exiles since 1960*. Projected topics incl. US immigration & refugee policy, Haitians in Miami, exile and humor, women writing in exile, Iranians in LA, etc. Contact: Gulliver, German-English Yearbook, c/o Ingrid Kerkhoff, editor, Waldstr. 19, D-5231 Steimel, Federal Republic of Germany.

**WESTAF's NATIONAL ARTS JOBBANK:** biweekly newsletter of national & foreign job listings. Free classifieds. Contact: Westaf's National Arts Jobbank, 236 Montezuma Ave., Santa Fe, NM 87501; (505) 988-1166; fax: (505) 982-9307.

## Resources ■ Funds

**1992 NAMAC MEDIA ARTS FUND** (formerly Media Arts Development Fund) guidelines are available. The fund, which supports small media organizations, emerging media programs w/in larger institutions, & multicultural organizations, will award from \$3,000 to \$15,000 grants to support exhibitions, artists services, artists' residencies, operating support, etc. Deadline for proposals: February 14. Contact: Mimi Zarsky, (510) 451-2717.



AFI/NEA awards grants for work in film preservation & restoration. Deadline: Jan. 31, 1992. For guidelines write: AFI/NEA Film Preservation Program, National Center for Film & Video Preservation at the American Film Institute, John F. Kennedy Center, Washington, D.C. 20566; (202) 828-4070.

CENTER FOR NEW TELEVISION offers national media awards in video, TV & film. Deadline: Feb. 4, 1992. Contact: Ray Bradford, project director, Center for New Television, 1440 N. Dayton, Chicago, IL 60622; (312) 951-6868.

DIRECTORS GUILD OF AMERICA awards for doc. filmmakers now open to nonmembers. Theatrically released or TV broadcast films now also open for consideration. Deadline: Dec. 31, 1991. Contact: Carlina Rodriguez, DGA, 110 West 57th St., New York, NY 10019; (212) 581-0370; fax: (212) 581-1441.

EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION CENTER offers electronic arts grants to nonprofit organizations in New York state & residency program grants to individual artists. Contact: Electronic Arts Grants Prog., Experimental TV Center, 180 Front St., Owego, NY 13827; (607) 687-4341.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ARTISTS' ORGANIZATIONS' Multi-Site Collaborations Program offers grants from \$5,000-\$25,000 to arts organizations. Deadline: April 20, 1992. For guidelines write: NAAO, 918 F St., NW, Washington, DC 20004; (202) 347-6350.

UNIV. FILM & VIDEO ASSOCIATION offers \$4,000 grants for student prod. or research. Deadline: Jan. 1, 1992. For guidelines write: J. Stephen Hank, Dept. of Drama & Communications, Univ. of New Orleans, Lakefront, New Orleans, LA 70148.

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## An Exercise in Gauntlet-Throwing by a Tired Old Indy Cat to All Self-Proclaimed Indy Kittens under 30 Who Will Listen

JILL GODMILOW

*As one of the independent media organizations that assumed a leading role in the creation of the Independent Television Service (ITVS), AIVF remains committed to discussion and debate concerning the policies and developments affecting this important new source of production funding for independent film and videomakers. In this spirit, we are pleased to print the following open letter from independent filmmaker and ITVS board member Jill Godmilow. We welcome comments on the ideas expressed in this letter and the concerns she raises.*

—Martha Gever  
Executive Director

Dear kittens,

OK, we're fading. Most of us, anyway. We're in our late 40s and too busy. Some have teaching jobs, fulltime. Some have cars. They break down. Some have babies, or kids in school. They're expensive. (It just happened to us—it'll happen to you.) We've got diseases—Epstein Barr, bad backs, worse. We get mammograms every year. And now we've got new responsibilities. Parents are sick or dying. From years at the shrink, later in the zendo, we know we've got to make our peace. I'm not complaining, but we're tired old indy cats.

We're not out to pasture yet, not brain dead. We are good for some things. We loan our hard-earned equipment to you younger kittens. We're available to look at your rough cuts (you hardly ever call), edit your applications, write letters of recommendation. We still sit on boards and panels. Someone could still get a Guggenheim. At the least, we'll be sitting there in those film schools, passing on what we know to your kid brothers and sisters. And when we die, you can have our jobs, our health plans, our seats on the faculty senate, our old 5800s. Take good care of them.

In better years, we got funded. Some of us were given a shot—very few blacks, very few Asians—but some of us. Nobody got rich. If you wanted to be independent (own your own soul was what it meant), you made your films out of 100-hour weeks, abused and exploited your friends, distributed your own work, wrote your own study guides, paid your own travel to festivals, called your own conferences, educated foundations, and somehow forked up your own health insurance.

You invented things like the Filmmakers Coop, Canyon Cinema, Pittsburgh Filmmakers, the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, Film Arts Foundation, Appalshop, Community Film Workshop, Film/Video Arts, Top Value TV, the Collective for Living Cinema, Visual Communications, Women Make Movies, Paper Tiger TV, Media Alliance, Black Filmmakers Foundation, and Asian CineVision to serve your purposes. Back then independents had the strength of lions, but now most of us are tired and can't swing with the big strokes anymore.

Okay. So where are you? You've got your diploma, your hi-8, and your VCR. You've made your first tape, maybe a second. You got a grant. You've been to a festival or two. You're fresh. You're ready. Good. Because while you were studying semiotics and we were having babies, the world turned, and now we have to invent something new.

Here we are on the brink, in very thin times. There's sanctioned racism running rampant, institutionalized homophobia, censorship, self-censorship, a Supreme Court that will make your life really miserable, and an organized, radical right that would, without blinking, close down every art theater in the country and defund public television to keep the lid on. What will you do?

As I see it, together we've got one more shot (a wisp of a chance) and the energy, I hope, to make a going concern of it. There is now a continuously replenishable pot of money for independent television. This has never happened before, at least not since I've been an "independent," and that's as long as there have been "independents." Where did this pot of money come from? A team of old cats lobbied Congress for five straight years (with help from the independent community) and drag-ged about \$8-million a year out of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to make sure that independent talk of all kinds—gay talk, labor talk, environment talk, talk by people of color—entered broadcast television in a significant way.

Today this pot is located in the office of the Independent Television Service (ITVS) in downtown St. Paul. Six million program dollars a year, maybe more in the future, has started flowing out of that office. That fund exists because, historical fluke as it seems, Congress was finally convinced that Public Broadcasting Service programming neither represents, addresses, nor serves the people of this country. Congress has recognized that there is no diversity in programming, which means

no blacks/browns/yellows/reds/gays/paraplegics/workers/teens/single mothers/truck drivers/etc., no political debate, no useful economic information, no philosophy, no fresh art, and certainly no fun on this public television. And the Congress seems to feel that there never will be if independent producers aren't funded to make television by organizations that independents control. Thus, ITVS.

Simply put, what Congress is saying is that there has been no public in public television. It addresses a fantasy audience which it hopes to create—a construction of vaguely liberal, upper-middle-class people, ashamed of their wealth and guilty of indolence, who want to "feel part of the solution" by "viewing" the problem; who want to see themselves as just a little more sophisticated than the fans of Connie, Oprah, and Phil; who feel they should know more than their parents did about the better things in life (gourmet cooking, opera, nature, stocks and bonds).

What does a public actually need? Recognition, stimulation, progressive motion, social justice, health, information, and peace. Thus it seems that for public TV to be public, it would have to project and then generate a functional community, one that takes care of itself and all parts of itself. For television to do this, it would have to talk with, not to, the native genius, eccentric and otherwise, in this country in a live, unmanaged manner. It would have to promote the battle of ideas and question operating mythologies. It would have to radically rethink "culture" and promote that special talent that has insight and vision. It would have to be truly international and feed back critical descriptions of our cultural, political, and economic presence on the globe, from all points of the globe. And it would have to be uniquely respectful and actively progressive toward the realities of the twentieth century: toxic waste, the depletion of the environment, racism, high level fraud, nuclear dangers, escalating medical costs, failing schools, war profiteering, the destruction of history, etc. To be public, public television would have to be messy—not well-pressed. It would have to be exuberant—a home grown, sometimes elegant, always fresh expression of the most vital elements in public life. It would have to be the site of public discourse and disorder—controversial and healing. But always it would be hot—hotter than anything around.

Do I dream of utopia? Perhaps, but how can you live without a dream? And why couldn't



# The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers

When you join the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, you're doing something for yourself—and for others. Membership entitles you to a wide range of benefits. Plus, it connects you with a national network of independent producers. Adding your voice helps us all. The stronger AIVF is, the more we can act as advocate for the interests of independents like yourself—inside the corridors of Washington, with the press, and with others who affect our livelihoods.

## 8 Benefits of Membership

### THE INDEPENDENT

Membership provides you with a year's subscription to *The Independent*. Published 10 times a year, the magazine is a vital source of information about the independent media field. Each issue helps you get down to business with festival listings, funding deadlines, exhibition venues, and more. Plus, you'll find thought-provoking features, coverage of the field's news, and regular columns on business, technical, and legal matters.

### THE FESTIVAL BUREAU

AIVF maintains up-to-date information on over 650 national and international festivals, and can help you determine which are right for your film or video.

### Liaison Service

AIVF works directly with many foreign festivals, in some cases collecting and shipping tapes or prints overseas, in other cases serving as the U.S. host to visiting festival directors who come to review work.

### Tape Library

Members can house copies of their work in the AIVF tape library for screening by visiting festival programmers. Or make your own special screening arrangements with AIVF.

### INFORMATION SERVICES

#### Distribution

In person or over the phone, AIVF can provide information about distributors and the kinds of films, tapes, and markets in which they specialize.

### AIVF's Member Library

Our library houses information on distributors, funders, and exhibitors, as well as sample contracts, funding applications, budgets, and other matters.

### SEMINARS

Our seminars explore current business, aesthetic, legal, and technical topics, giving independent producers a valuable forum to discuss relevant issues.

### BOOKS AND TAPES

AIVF has the largest mail order catalog of media books and audiotaped seminars in the U.S. Our list covers all aspects of film and video production. And we're constantly updating our titles, so independents everywhere have access to the latest media information. We also publish a growing list of our own titles, covering festivals, distribution, and foreign and domestic production resource guides.

*continued*

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Whether it's freedom of expression, public funding levels, public TV, contractual agreements, cable legislation, or other issues that affect independent producers, AIVF is there working for you.

### Production Insurance

A production insurance plan, tailor-made for AIVF members and covering public liability, faulty film and tape, equipment, sets, scenery, props, and extra expense, is available, as well as an errors and omissions policy with unbeatable rates.

## Group Health, Disability, and Life Insurance Plans with TEIGIT

AIVF currently offers two health insurance policies, so you're able to find the one that best suits your needs.

### Dental Plan

Reduced rates for dental coverage are available to NYC and Boston-area members.

### Service Discounts

In all stages of production and in most formats, AIVF members can take advantage of discounts on equipment rentals, processing, editing services, and other production necessities.

## National Car Rental

National offers a 10-20 percent discount to AIVF members. Write for the AIVF authorization number.

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Credit cards through the Maryland Bank are available to members with a minimum annual income of \$18,000. Fees are waived the first year.

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Keep watching *The Independent* for information about additional benefits.

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television configure that dream? Maybe it can't accomplish it, but it could see us through the next 20 years, at least until the barbarians are gone.

This ITVS money represents an opportunity that most likely won't present itself again. The money has been snatched from the gullet of a regressive, politically appointed, quasi-governmental agency, but it's ours to use to change the face, tone, language, discourse, look, and finally, the function of public television.

If you had any smarts, you'd be battering down the doors. You'd be fierce. Every coffee shop and pancake house in this country, every back room in every media art center, every classroom in every film school, every public access center, would be seething with your smart-ass, tie-dyed, vegetarian, computer-literate, Simpsonian, Buddhist ideas for remaking public television. Every media access center in this country would be roundtabling these ideas and making proposals for new and public forms of television.

For instance, you and me, we'd be trying to figure out how, with television, to make racism literally unthinkable—not by more victim documentaries (that adds to the problem), but by changing the frame, discussing it in our own language, demystifying it, graphing its economic base, and stimulating action against it. And the same for sexism, ageism, and our other ills. We're talking here about television that reactivates civil and political life, that instructs us on remedies, promotes tolerance, and provides some comfort. In other words, I'm talking about creating the place we'd go to feel part of a successful enterprise called human society.

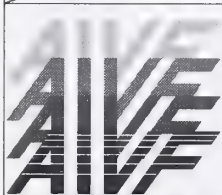
That money, this television, is untouchable by the powers that have traditionally touched independent work. It's in the contract. Form and meaning are ours. PBS can refuse to air it, but then we can air it somewhere else. (There may soon be an independent "green" cable service. I'm sure that they would be happy to show our work, if PBS won't.) They simply cannot refuse all of it, or they will cease to exist. And I don't think they will refuse it, because it will be exciting, fresh, undupli-catable, and will bring chunks of new audience to a failing system.

Through ITVS (and additionally through CPB's Program Fund, Minority Consortia, with our Rockefeller Fellowships and our NEA grants) independents should be able to make handmade, beautiful television in every form at modest cost: game shows about American history; a Johnny Carson-like talk show with William Kunstler as Johnny hosting 10 ex-prisoners from Attica who all pile up on that little sofa; a series of live shows with five remotes—for instance, five African Americans (a community leader in Oakland, a single mother in Harlem, a gospel singer in Memphis, a filmmaker in Wheeling, and a historian in Newark) in their homes, with their friends, talking for two hours about the political frame-up of the African American community by the appointment of Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court;

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I like high and low culture, but I like it strong and fresh, like good coffee. Designer documentaries on liberal themes with \$30,000 original scores are nice but far from the point—not the healthiest dream to dream right now. Before we become another Animal Farm, our independent television, every minute of it, would have to implant PBS with athletic, overdetermined bacteria which could infect and eventually destroy its host. It must spark participatory community out of our nonfunctional, comatose, late-twentieth-century daze. It could. The process itself, of making living television collaboratively, could make community.

For continuing success and Congressional appropriations, we would have to make programs that are 1. highly visible (identifiable as independently produced and voiced), no matter where they appear on the schedule, 2. unrefusable, in that they address anybody/everybody, not by generalizing but by speaking directly and specifically, the way you talk to your brother or sister while the rest of the family listens in, 3. sustainable, through repeating forms regularly broadcast, with unpredictable content, 4. immediate (often live), structured to respond quickly to events and cause immediate response, 5. subversive, taking action against television by speaking way beyond its frozen frame of address, 6. relatively cheap, so that this money goes a long, long way, 7. popular. None of this will work unless our programs generate new audiences—black, red, yellow, blue and green, gay, straight, old, young, non-voting, voting, literate, non-literate, healthy, substance-abusing, spiritual, and iconoclastic audiences. I figure that half of the current PBS viewers will click off at first look. Later, they'll be back.

This kind of work requires passion and patience. It is best made by collectivities of individuals, multi-generational if possible. No one can do this alone. I don't know if you're up for it, or up to

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it. I don't even know if this theoretical community of independent media artists under 30 actually exists. But there are lots of film degrees bestowed every year, and not everyone is looking for the "I-shop-therefore-I-am" nice life.

One third of the ITVS program money has been set aside for what is called Open Solicitations, where (in much the same way as happens with the National Endowments, American Film Institute, and state arts councils) film- and videomakers can apply for full funding to make their next project, provided it falls into the stressed but vaguely delineated program areas like "minorities," "social issues," "children." This is appropriate and will make many more independent works available to television viewers, but it is likely to produce the kind of product that has always been produced by independents—heartfelt, beautifully crafted, single programs that end up scattered willy-nilly through the PBS schedule and disappear into thin air. These films and tapes are important, and the more space they take up on PBS the better, but they are designed for other mediums. They will not themselves structurally change the face of public television.

Much more tantalizing is the other two-thirds of the pot. This money has been set aside for "focused modes"—focused in the sense of determining subject areas, then calling for proposals. If we don't propose those subject areas, someone else will. If we don't have ideas about how to refresh those subjects, nothing will change. Here is where the "television" ideas could be made: series, regularly broadcast live television, experimental forms of narrative, quiz shows, sitcoms, really anything. There is enough money, for once, to try these things. And there is space for everyone—formalists, activists, theorists, ethnographers, true believers, narrativists, and poets.

In Poland, after martial law put Solidarity leaders in jail and forced the movement underground, there were evening curfews and there was government propaganda on TV. In one Polish city, every evening when curfew began, the people put their televisions in their windows, pointed to the street. Everyone was inside. We could all turn our televisions to the street and go outside and party, dance to our tunes.

If our stuff is animated, sure of itself, smart, fun, and completely unique, we could get a foot in the door. We could burn a hole in the drugged demographics and expose what's left as infertile and useless. We could, in fact, make television decidedly "educational" by raising the whole platform of discourse in this country. Or we can have a nice life in a police state on a dying planet. If we don't do it, nobody will.

Excuse me now. I've got to water my plants, make the kids' sandwiches, then sleep. I need seven hours sleep. At my age, you need sleep.

*Jill Godmilow joined the board of ITVS in October, but writes here as an independent film- and videomakers who's been at it since 1967.*

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## MINUTES FROM THE AIVF/ FIVF BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

On September 14, 1991, the board of directors of the Association of Independent Video and Film-makers and the Foundation for Independent Video and Film met at Stable Films. In attendance were: Dai Sil Kim-Gibson (chair), Robert Richter (president), Dee Davis (secretary), Debra Zimmerman (treasurer), Loni Ding, Jim Klein, Bart Weiss, Charles Burnett, and Martha Gever (ex-officio).

Executive director Martha Gever reported on the completion of the application for an NEA Advancement Grant. This year's Donor Advised Fund is underway as Kevin Duggan prepares a list of possible panelists for the fund.

Program staff followed with their reports. Festival Bureau/Information Services director Kathryn Bowser announced that production work on the new 1992 *AIVF Festival Guide* will begin by the end of October. Kathryn Bowser reported on Pearl Bowser's progress with the Africa directory, and plans to become more involved with the project to expedite its completion. Bowser will also be looking into the expansion of use of the video library.

The *Independent* editor Pat Thomson reported on the staff restructuring and the possibility of expanding the position of advertising director to full time. She noted efforts to expand West Coast coverage. Managing editor Ellen Levy reported on efforts to increase distribution through outreach to faculty and promotion of the magazine through exchange advertising. A new ad for AIVF is being developed.

Seminars/membership director Alice Ro plans to recruit more student members through faculty in colleges and universities. Ro also reported problems with the health insurance programs offered to members. The disability insurance offered through TEIGIT will likely become unavailable. Members joining Mutual of Omaha must sign a form which could allow the company to release the results of HIV tests to information services shared with other insurance companies. Zimmerman suggested membership outreach via information packages for workshops at various media centers.

Committee reports followed. Advocacy Committee member Jim Klein agreed to draft a letter with Gever to PBS stations in support of *P.O.V.*, following the controversy of *P.O.V.*'s broadcast of *Tongues Untied*. Upon Dee Davis' suggestion, the board also agreed that AIVF should develop a more proactive role in advocacy. Bart Weiss raised the issue of increased censorship activity at the local level, citing attempts to impose local movie rating boards that would replace the current MPAA system in Fort Worth. Questions concerning the ITVS were asked, and it was suggested that more regular contact between AIVF and ITVS would be helpful. Loni Ding noted that ITVS' executive director testified on behalf of independent pro-

ducers at congressional hearings on public broadcasting reauthorization. AIVF representation at ITVS board meetings was suggested as a method for increasing the information flow.

The membership committee reviewed the preliminary results of the membership survey. They agreed with the suggestion to target students for membership through members of AIVF who teach. A computer bulletin board was proposed as a method to improve communication with members.

Following discussion of the International Media Research Exchange, Kim-Gibson's motion to empower Gever to negotiate a letter of agreement with Karen Ranucci on the points presented (i.e., clarification of database compatibility to AIVF's, and future use of the database) was passed with a vote of five to two, with one abstention.

Richter nominated Gever as AIVF's nominee to the board of the National Coalition of Independent Public Broadcasting Producers. The vote passed unanimously.

The officers of the new AIVF/FIVF Board of Directors are: chair, Kim-Gibson; president, Richter; vice president, Davis; secretary, Ding; treasurer, Zimmerman. Each officer was elected by a unanimous affirmative vote. AIVF committees were reconstituted as: Membership: Weiss (chair), Klein, Ding, and Zimmerman; Advocacy: Klein (chair), Richter, Gever, and Davis; Development: Davis and Kim-Gibson.

The second half of the meeting was devoted to an AIVF/FIVF board retreat. It began with a look at the statistics gathered through the membership survey. The board was in agreement that outreach to students would be beneficial. Suggestions included sending copies of *The Independent* to college faculty as a teaching tool, posting ads on college bulletin boards, and meeting with groups of young producers to solicit ideas. The general consensus was to leave this task up to the membership committee.

The board agreed on the importance of AIVF making an effort to reach people working in public access cable. It was decided that materials should be sent to access centers.

Meetings with small, targeted groups of producers were suggested and generally approved as an effective method of ascertaining the needs of independent media producers.

Priorities for AIVF and FIVF advocacy efforts were established as: 1. public funding for arts and humanities; 2. public television, especially ITVS and improved links with the Minority Consortia. Research and information relating to new film and

video technologies was endorsed as another important aspect of advocacy for the organization.

The board agreed to establish a nominating committee to identify potential members of the FIVF board. The nominees should be able to work on fundraising and financial/marketing issues. Committee members are: Gever, Zimmerman, Kim-Gibson, Davis, and Richter.

The following dates have been selected by the board for meetings in 1992: January 11th, April 25th, June 20th, and October 17th. Committee meetings will be scheduled on the preceding day, which AIVF members are encouraged to attend. Call AIVF to confirm date, time, and location.

## MEMBERABILIA

Kudos to NEA 1991 Film/Video Grant recipients Tony Buba, Kate Davis, Alyson Denny, Mindy Faber, Christine Choy, Renee Tajima, Vanalyne Green, Barbara Hammer, Leslie Harris, Leandro Katz, Brady Lewis, Fred Riedel, Peter Hutton, Jem Cohen, Debra Robinson, Stephen Roszell, Ron Schildknecht, and Peter Wang.

American Film Institute Independent Film and Videomaker Grants were given to AIVF members Gregg Araki, *The Living End*; Skip Battaglia, *Restlessness*; Shu Lea Cheang, *For Whom the Air Waves*; Mindy Faber, *Delirium*; Janice Findley, *I Am the Night*; Leslie Harris, *Just Another Girl on the I.R.T.*; Karen Ishizuka, *Plantations, Politics, and Beyond*; Nina Menkes, *Mrs. Lafaver*; Sylvia Morales, *Faith Even to the Fire*; Sandra Osawa, *Usual and Accustomed Places of the NW Tribes*; Gini Reticker, *Women and Children Last*; and Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Shoot for the Contents*.


Globalvision received a grant from the Aaron Diamond Foundation for *Rights and Wrongs*, a weekly human rights show. *My Dinner with Abbie*, by Howard Katzman and Nancy Cohen, won a prize at the Earthpeace Film Festival in Burlington, Vermont.

In the first round of its Multicultural Programming Solicitation, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting funded projects by these AIVF members: Roy Campanella II, *F.D.H.S.*; Janice Tanaka, *Who's Going to Pay for These Donuts Anyway?*; Peter Wang, *Life with the Bartletts*; Jose Luis Ruiz, *Chicano! History of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement*, and Frank Blythe, *War Eagles*. Congratulations to all!

### Calling all arts advocates Our phone tree needs you!

AIVF is setting up a phone tree that can be activated during arts funding and other political battles. We need your help—especially members from rural and sparsely populated states. To sign on, write: AIVF Advocacy Committee, AIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th fl., New York, NY 10012.





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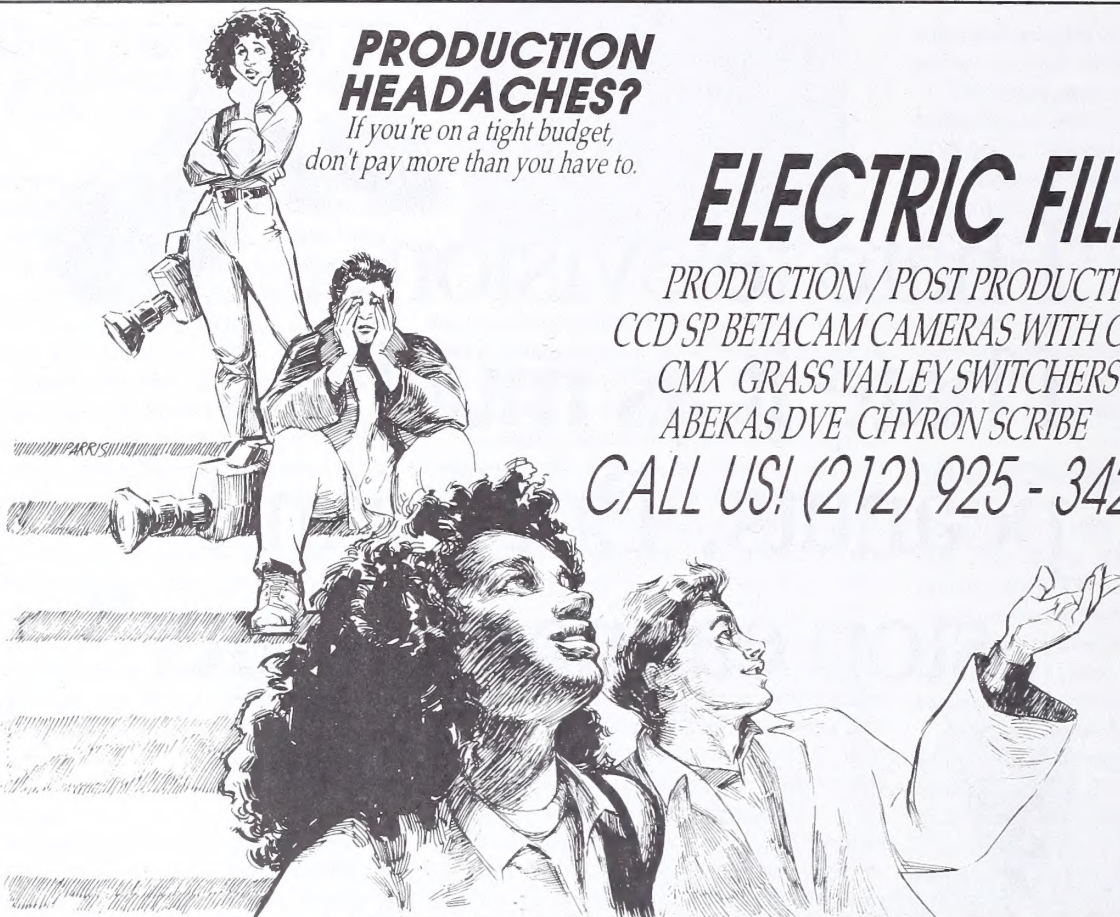
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